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# COLOUR PREJUDICE IN BRITAIN

A STUDY  
OF WEST INDIAN WORKERS  
IN LIVERPOOL, 1941-1951

by

ANTHONY H. RICHMOND

M.A., B.Sc. (Econ.)

*Lecturer in Social Theory in the Department of Social Study  
of the University of Edinburgh*

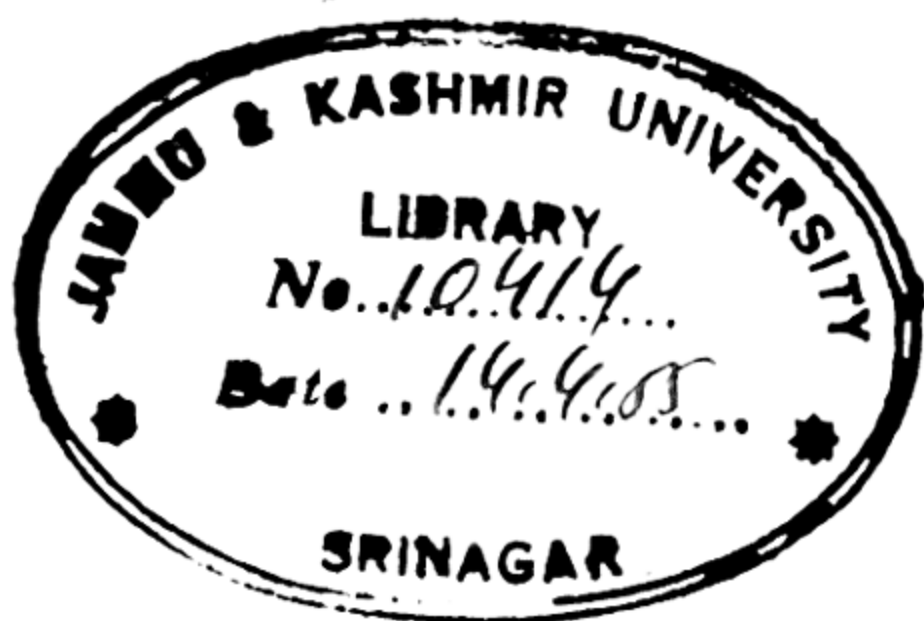
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TO MY WIFE



## PREFACE

**T**HIS book is an account of the assimilation and adjustment of 345 West Indian Negroes who came to England between 1941 and 1943, many of whom have stayed to the present day. The study endeavours to trace the relationships between this group of West Indians and the English people with whom they came in contact over a period of approximately ten years. It is therefore a study in the two related fields of immigration and racial relations.

Ethnic minorities and immigrant groups in their relations with others in society have been intensively studied, especially in America during the last fifty years, and a well-established body of hypotheses concerning inter-group relations now exists. In the present research an attempt has been made to examine the pattern of behaviour which emerged between the West Indian Negroes and other groups with which they had contact in England, in the light of a general theory of inter-group relations based mainly upon American experience. The different cultural and historical background to racial relations and immigration in England might be expected to influence the resulting behaviour of the groups, leading to significant comparisons and contrasts with experience elsewhere. Where American experience appears to be repeated, the evidence provided by the circumstances of somewhat different social context should provide added confirmation of the universality of the general theory.

In the introductory chapter a general theory of inter-group relations is outlined, followed by a brief discussion of the main research methods and field techniques employed in the enquiry. The second chapter is devoted to a comparative discussion of the background to racial relations in Britain and America. Readers who are primarily interested in the concrete evidence contained in the report may wish to commence reading at Chapter III. This and subsequent chapters contain a systematic account of the experiences of the West Indian workers in Britain. In the concluding chapter an attempt is made to relate the findings to

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the theoretical considerations outlined at the beginning and to consider the practical implications.

Where direct quotations have been made from documentary or interview data, these have been retained, as far as possible, exactly as written or spoken. Occasional changes in grammar, spelling or punctuation have been made, but only where this was essential for the sake of clarity.

The initiative and inspiration behind this enquiry belong to Professor T. S. Simey, who originally conceived the idea of an investigation into racial relations in Liverpool. I am very grateful to Professor Simey for the very helpful advice and criticism which he has provided at all stages of the research. Thanks are also due to others who have provided valuable guidance on various questions; in particular mention must be made of Dr. Dennis Chapman, Mr. Duncan Mitchell, Miss Joan Woodward, who advised on industrial aspects of the enquiry, and Miss E. Gittus, who guided me on statistical questions and was also responsible for the work on Hollerith machines. Mrs. M. Moore rendered valuable aid in the tedious task of making abstracts from documentary material. I am also indebted to the University of Liverpool for the generous grant which enabled this work to be published.

Acknowledgement and thanks must be given to officials of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, both Regional and Local Offices, without whose active co-operation this study would not have been possible. In particular, I should like to mention Mr. E. H. McGale of the Regional Office, Manchester, and Mr. D. Douglas of the Local Welfare Office, Liverpool. Criticism and valuable help have also been given by Mr. Charles Owen, then of the Colonial Office, Welfare Department, Liverpool. I should like to thank the Liverpool Council of Social Service for permission to examine and make extracts from the files of the Liverpool Association for the Welfare of Coloured People.

I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the late Mr. Arnold R. Watson, whose energy and enthusiasm made the Ministry of Labour Scheme, of which he had charge, a pioneer experiment in breaking down inter-racial barriers. His advice and guidance at the early stages of the research were invaluable, and the present report would have benefited greatly from his criticism had he lived to see its completion. Mr. Learie Constantine, M.B.E., was the Ministry Welfare Officer for the West Indians during the war and knew more than anyone of the day-to-day working of the 'Scheme'. Mr. Constantine kindly read the original draft of this report and his criticisms and comments have been

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most helpful, as have those of Dr. Ruth Landes, one time of Columbia University, U.S.A., Professor W. J. H. Sprott of the University of Nottingham, and Dr. Kenneth Little of the University of Edinburgh. The assistance of my wife at all stages of the research has been invaluable.

I should like to thank the publishers and editors of *Phylon*, *The Mid-West Journal*, *The Sociological Review* and of *Occupational Psychology* for permission to reproduce material, including tables and diagrams, originally published in these journals.

Finally, and above all, I should like to express my sincere appreciation to all those West Indians who have so readily co-operated with me in the course of this research and among whom I have made so many real friends.

A. H. R.

*Edinburgh, April 1953*





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## CHAPTER I

### THEORY AND METHODS

#### 1. THEORY OF INTER-GROUP RELATIONS

**T**HERE appears to be a universal tendency for individuals to identify themselves with each other in primary and secondary groups to the exclusion of others who are regarded as members of other, often rival, groups. This tendency has been described as the 'we/they' dichotomy or the 'in-group/out-group' delineation. Such a division of group membership can normally take place only where the members of the different groups are easily distinguished from each other by some cultural trait which may have varying degrees of permanence. Language, dress, diet, religion, and similar acquired characteristics can usually be modified, and may in fact disappear altogether among descendants of a minority group. Other factors relating to physical appearance, such as skin colour or hair form and texture, are more permanent and may persist through several generations despite inter-marriage between the groups. The high 'visibility' of such traits is an important factor in maintaining the distinction between in-group and out-group.<sup>1</sup>

The intensity of in-group feeling often appears to be directly related to the extent to which members feel themselves threatened by an out-group. Out-groups conceived as sources of frustration to the goals of the in-group will become objects against which aggression will be directed in various forms either direct or indirect. Unconscious guilt feelings in the individual may lead to the projection of undesirable characteristics upon the members of the out-group, rather than to the admission that they exist in the in-group. Once the out-group comes to be associated with undesirable characteristics in the minds of the in-group these attitudes are justified and rationalised.

As the sense of group membership emerges so the individual gains

<sup>1</sup> Park, R. E., *Race and Culture*, pp. 190 and 228-9 (The Free Press, Illinois, 1950).

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an essential feeling of security by having a clearly defined rôle in relation to the others. These rôles are known, understood and accepted and define the status relationships between individuals and groups. If this status relationship is not clearly defined or is felt to be threatened in some way, insecurity and consequent anxiety is created, which may lead to aggressive attitudes towards others. The inter-play of rôle and status with reference to others creates the feeling of self-respect or self-esteem, which McDougal has called the 'self-regarding sentiments'. There are many ways in which the individual endeavours to maintain his sense of self-esteem and ego-security. Adlerian psychology, with its emphasis upon feelings of inferiority and superiority and the resulting complexes, is primarily concerned with this problem.<sup>1</sup> A strong sense of inferiority may be suppressed; compensatory traits of display aggression and claims to superiority may arise in an attempt to restore a sense of security and allay anxiety.

Prejudiced attitudes towards others appear to be closely connected with mobility of status, especially if the direction of movement is downwards. Myrdal<sup>2</sup> has pointed out that prejudice against the Negro in the southern states of America is greatest among the 'poor whites' whose status and security are both uncertain. Bettelheim and Janowitz<sup>3</sup> have confirmed that ethnic intolerance is especially acute among those who are downwardly mobile in social class and is found where there is cause for anxiety and insecurity. In another study,<sup>4</sup> the same writers have suggested that prejudice arises, less from objective and real frustrations than from a subjective sense of deprivation which may or may not have its source in reality. Further studies of the personality correlates of intolerance have shown that highly prejudiced persons, or in the case of children, the parents of prejudiced subjects, tend to show considerable concern about status, and an anxiety to assert their own superiority, or that of the groups with which they identify.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that there also appears to be a marked

<sup>1</sup> Adler, A., *Problems of Neurosis* (Kegan Paul, London, 1929).

<sup>2</sup> Myrdal, G., *An American Dilemma*, p. 597 *et passim* (Harper, New York, 1944).

<sup>3</sup> Bettelheim, B., and Janowitz, M., 'Ethnic Intolerance', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LV, September 1949.

<sup>4</sup> Bettelheim, B., Janowitz, M., and Shils, E., 'A Study of the Social Economic and Psychological Correlates of Intolerance among Urban Veterans of Enlisted Rank', *American Psychologist* (1947).

<sup>5</sup> Adorno, T. W., *et al*, *The Authoritarian Personality*, p. 418 ff. *et passim* (Harper, New York 1950).



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preoccupation with status among the members of minority and under-privileged groups such as the Negroes in America. It has been shown that intra-group tensions among Negroes frequently take the form of strong class feelings.<sup>1</sup>

The effect upon the personality development of immigrants and the descendants of immigrants as a result of uncertainty regarding status and group membership has been demonstrated by Stonequist.<sup>2</sup> The conflict between the cultural values of the society from which the immigrant has come and the one he has entered has profound effects upon him and his children. The 'marginal man' is constantly trying to achieve the sense of 'belongingness' referred to by Sherif.<sup>3</sup> Conflicts in his personality, which are reflected in his behaviour, are a result of this uncertain status and insecure group membership.

A further important factor affecting inter-group relations is the formation of rigid concepts governing the thought and behaviour of people towards others. These rigid concepts or stereotypes are generalisations regarding particular types of individual or group. They do not correspond with objective reality, although they may have had their origin in limited experience of individuals within the group; stereotypes may also arise as a result of distorted impressions created through reading books, newspaper reports, or merely result from accepting hearsay without question. Such impressions tend to be generalised and applied to all members of the group indiscriminately. There is further reason to believe that these stereotypes, and the frames of reference that give rise to them, are closely related to the individual's group membership. The sentiments of the individual towards a group are determined less by his knowledge about that group than by the sentiments prevalent in the social atmosphere which surrounds him. This has been demonstrated in the case of changing attitudes towards the Negro among people moving from the northern to the southern states of America.<sup>4</sup> There appears to be a gradual adaptation to the point of view of those people with whom one habitually mixes. In this sense the individual is dependent upon the group for his perception of what constitutes 'reality'. Newcomb has made this point in drawing attention

<sup>1</sup> Dai, B., 'Some Problems of Personality Development among Negro Children', *Personality in Nature Society and Culture*, ed. Kluckhohn and Murray (Cape, London, 1949).

<sup>2</sup> Stonequist, E. V., *The Marginal Man* (Scribners, New York, 1937).

<sup>3</sup> Sherif, M., *An Outline of Social Psychology*, p. 250 (Harper, New York, 1948).

<sup>4</sup> Horowitz, E. L., 'Development of Attitudes Towards the Negro', *Readings in Psychology*, ed. Newcomb and Hartley (Holt, New York, 1947).

to the distinction between what he calls a 'private' and a 'shared' hostility. The latter is accompanied by a social re-enforcement.

'It is not only that one finds oneself in agreement with the expressed opinions of one's associates; it is more important that one's own meanings (with reference to the out-group) square with the meanings of one's associates. The normal processes of communication go on, unimpeded, and thus a shared hostility passes all the tests of social reality, within one's own group.'<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand the individual whose hostility is a private one must deal with the problem of his relations with the other person himself; he must 'muster his own defences' as Newcomb puts it. In the case of both private and shared hostilities there is a more or less fixed perception of the relationships between the self and the other person or group. The fixed perception and the frame of reference leading to it are maintained by barriers to communication with the object of hostility.

These barriers to communication may be of two kinds. They may be subjective barriers in the mind of the person concerned. A hypothesis originally put forward by Kerr<sup>2</sup> and subsequently investigated by Gordon<sup>3</sup> suggests that there is a connection between the rigidity or flexibility of mental imagery, and the persistence of false stereotyped impressions. In the case of shared hostilities the barriers to communication may become institutionalised through the operation of discrimination, segregation and 'colour bar'. Once such a barrier becomes institutionalised and discrimination operates against a group, the principles of the 'self-justifying prophecy' comes into operation. For example, if it is commonly held that Negroes are poor, unhealthy, unskilled, even lazy and truculent, then the operation of discrimination against Negroes in industry with resultant unemployment may in fact lead to the actual appearance of these characteristics among Negroes, in a proportion greater than in the white group. Once such a belief is re-enforced by some kind of factual survey, in which the existence of these characteristics is pointed out, then the false stereotypes will be so re-enforced as to make their removal doubly difficult.

This tendency is closely related to the previous remarks regarding

<sup>1</sup> Newcomb, T. M., 'Autistic Hostility and Social Reality', *Human Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr, M., 'An experimental Investigation of National Stereotypes', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XXXV, Jan.-April 1943.

<sup>3</sup> Gordon, R., 'An investigation into some of the factors that favour the formation of Stereotyped Images', *British Journal of Psychology* (General Section), Vol. XXXIV, Part 3, March 1949.

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status and security. The relationship has been clearly stated by Newcomb :

'We now have abundant evidence that persistent attitudes presuppose certain fixed frames of reference, and are most likely to change if and as the frames are shifted . . . The frame of reference which determines interpersonal attitudes presumably has to do with perceived status-relationship . . . Hostile impulses commonly arise then, when status relationship is so perceived that another is viewed as a threat. Such perception arises through inter-action, and is likely to persist until modified by further inter-action. If, as a result of a hostile attitude emerging from the newly perceived status-relationship, communication with the other person is avoided, the conditions necessary for eliminating the hostile attitude are not likely to occur.'<sup>1</sup>

Stereotyped attitudes towards others are not modified by the mere acquisition of knowledge which contradicts the stereotype. An individual who appears to contradict the popularly held opinion will be regarded as a mere exception to the general rule. Any change in a person's attitudes and beliefs must involve an actual change in the frames of reference—an alteration in the cognitive structure must be accompanied by an alteration in the values and emotive factors involved in the process of perception. As Newcomb has put it with regard to the reduction of hostility between individuals and groups:

'Individual hostility is most likely to be reduced when institutionalised barriers to communication with members of other groups are crossed, with the shared support of members of one's own group.'<sup>2</sup>

It has been pointed out that even events on a world-wide scale may leave people unmoved in their attitudes and beliefs. The Nuremberg trials, for example, seem to have left some Germans quite unmoved<sup>3</sup> others became confused, disillusioned and embittered. Sherif has pointed out that when established reference frames become shaky or break down, the individual tends to experience uncertainty, ambiguity or anxiety until he accepts some new reference point or frame.<sup>4</sup>

In the light of the above analysis, prejudicial stereotypes may be considered to be a group norm by which members of an out-group will be judged. Such frames of reference create an artificial barrier to free communication between the members of the two groups which often

<sup>1</sup> Newcomb, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Newcomb, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> Kempner, R. M. W., 'Impact of Nuremberg on the German Mind', *The New York Times Magazine*: quoted by Sherif, M., *An Outline of Social Psychology* (Harper, New York, 1948).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 239.



takes on institutionalised form. This, in its turn, re-enforces the prejudice by preventing the falsity of the stereotype from being exposed. Even when the falsity is demonstrated a change in attitude between the individuals and groups only takes place when the group as a whole supports the changed perception.

The general theory of group relations which has been outlined can be conveniently stated in terms of Lewinian 'field theory'.<sup>1</sup> According to this theory behaviour is a function of subjective factors in the individual, and external environmental factors, which together form a person's 'life space'. Belonging or not belonging to a group is equivalent to having a position inside or outside the group. A person's position in relation to the group determines his rights and duties and is an important factor in creating a sense of security and allaying anxiety. In so far as a person is a member, or aspires to be a member, of more than one group, so conflicting forces may impinge upon him. His successful adaptation depends upon the avoidance of too great a conflict between the demands of the two groups. Lewin points out that a change in group membership and status (gaining recognition or love, or being rejected by an individual or a larger group) creates similar reactions to the experience of success or failure in relation to one's level of aspiration.

Lewin<sup>2</sup> also points out that the individual is dependent upon the group for a determination of what constitutes 'reality' to him. The general acceptance of a belief, such as an incorrect stereotype may be the very cause of its not being questioned. A change in perception can only take place when the individual changes his group membership, or when the group as a whole accepts a new set of facts and values: that is to say when emotive and cognitive frames of reference are shifted.

### *Summary Theory of Inter-group Relations*

The theoretical considerations outlined above can be conveniently summarised in the form of three main hypotheses which will be examined again in the light of the evidence contained in this report and discussed in the conclusion.

#### *(1) In-group/Out-group Hypothesis:*

'Where two or more groups of different ethnic composition come into contact and communication with each other there will be a tendency for the

<sup>1</sup> Lewin, K., *Field Theory in Social Science* (Tavistock Publications, London, 1952).

<sup>2</sup> Lewin, K., *Resolving Social Conflicts* (Harper, New York, 1950).

## THEORY AND METHODS

members of the same ethnic group to identify closely with one another to the exclusion of the members of other groups to whom derogatory characteristics and hostile intentions may be attributed.'

### (2) *Status/Security Hypothesis:*

'An individual's sense of status and security is derived from his group membership and through receiving expressions of love, approval and esteem from those with whom he identifies. Insecure group membership or fear of losing status is a source of anxiety and may result in the direction of hostility upon out-group members and others.'

### (3) *Frames of Reference/Communication Hypothesis:*

'The attitude of a person towards members of out-groups is the product of a frame of reference largely derived from the individual's own group membership. Subjective and institutionalised barriers to communication re-enforce stereotyped beliefs and hostile attitudes which are only effectively modified when the individual has the shared support of the members of his own group.'

## 2. PROCEDURE AND METHODS EMPLOYED IN THE ENQUIRY

It has sometimes been suggested that the preoccupation of social scientists with problems of method is a sign of the immaturity of the subject and the belief, on the part of research workers, that they must justify themselves before those who are more familiar with the accepted procedures of the natural sciences. Whether this is true or not the fact remains that it is highly desirable that the methods and techniques employed in social research should be described explicitly so that the reader can judge for himself the value of the work. For this reason the author makes no apology for this lengthy discussion of method.

### *Preliminary Exploration*

In the first stage of this research the problem under investigation was only broadly defined; the practical limits of the field were not clear, and no precisely defined objectives had been formulated. Decisions had not been reached as to the most appropriate techniques to be employed. The author was faced with the broad field of racial relations in Liverpool. Some months before his arrival in 1949, there had been disturbances between coloured and white people in the south end of Liverpool, and it was generally felt that a sociological study would be of value in throwing light upon some of the factors affecting relationships between the two groups. Since only one person was to be engaged upon the research

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it was necessary to limit the field drastically in order to create a manageable research project. The coloured community of Liverpool is of a very heterogeneous nature and it was quickly recognised that it would be necessary to limit the investigation to one group within it; preferably a group with some measure of internal cohesion, and about whom it would be possible to obtain sufficient information of a reliable character.

All existing sources of information about the coloured community in Liverpool were consulted. These consisted largely of the publications and records of the Association for the Welfare of Coloured People, which was formed in 1929 and closed in 1946, sundry newspaper reports on the 'colour question', and the views of people who had some personal knowledge. Every endeavour was made to become known by, and accepted in, the coloured community itself, as a person to whom it was possible to talk freely and express one's own views, feelings and grievances without the usual constraint which is felt by coloured people in their relations with white. A number of personal friends were made among coloured people from whom much valuable information was obtained.

In view of the extremely delicate nature of the relationships built up and the difficult questions involved, this preliminary period was necessarily a long one (approximately nine months). During this time it was discovered that a group of 345 West Indian technicians and trainees had come to England between 1941 and 1943 and that many of them were still residing in Liverpool. It was found that a great deal of information could be obtained about this group of men from the records of the Welfare Office of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. Until 1946 the Ministry had special machinery for dealing with the administrative and welfare problems of this group of volunteer workers who had come from Jamaica and the other islands in the West Indies. It was decided, therefore, to limit the field of the research to this group of West Indians and their relations with English people. The object was to assess the extent to which these men had been accepted and assimilated into the English society, and the way in which they had adjusted to conditions as they found them in the factory and in the community.

### *Collection of the Data*

The sources of information and data upon which this study has been based can be divided into two classes: (1) documentary data; and (2) interview data. Wherever possible the two independent sources of information have been used to verify and check each other.



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*Documentary data.* The sources of documentary evidence and the kind of information that these sources have provided are:

(a) Newspaper reports, particularly of incidents between coloured and white persons, and accounts of prosecutions of West Indians for various offences. Articles expressing attitudes and opinions on the colour question.

(b) Records of the Association for the Welfare of Coloured People, including their published reports. This Association was closely connected with the various voluntary efforts for the welfare of the West Indians from the date of their arrival in this country. The Association kept very detailed records of its proceedings and the writer was able to make abstracts from a number of unpublished reports and minutes.

(c) Ministry of Labour records:

- (i) Monthly reports to the Regional Office from the Welfare Officer in charge of the West Indians between March 1941 and 1946.
- (ii) Periodic reports of Regional Officers to Headquarters upon the progress of the scheme.
- (iii) Reports of visiting officials including a representative of the International Labour Office.
- (iv) Sundry correspondence between the Welfare Department and Trade Unions, Employers, etc.
- (v) Records of the Regional Office at Manchester relating to West Indians.
- (vi) Individual case files on each West Indian from the date of his arrival in this country until his discharge from the scheme. The files contained a number of letters from the men to the Welfare Officer and other documents which provided valuable insights into the personal problems facing the technicians and trainees. Each file also had a report on the individual's skill and behaviour, which was made by the Welfare Officer before the winding up of the scheme. The statistical data was transferred onto a record sheet and subsequently punched onto Hollerith cards to simplify analysis. The record sheet was as shown on p. 10.

*Interview data.* As has already been mentioned a preliminary period was spent in getting to know the coloured community of Liverpool and in gaining acceptance by them as a familiar figure to whom they were free to express their own personal feelings and views without fear of being rebuffed or rebuked. It was particularly useful during this period

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## BASIC DATA ON WEST INDIAN TECHNICIANS AND TRAINEES (From Ministry of Labour Files)

<i>Code</i>		<i>Position</i>
1. (a) Contingent Number		1-11
(b) Individual Number		1-71
2. Colony of Origin:	Jamaica	1
	British Honduras	2
	Bahamas	3
	Barbados	4
	British Guiana	5
	Leeward Is.	6
	Windward Is.	7
3. Date of Arrival	February 1941	1
	August 1941	2
	June 1942	3
	October 1942	4
	November 1942	5
	December 1942	6
	January 1943	7
4. Date of Birth:	(not coded)	
5. Marital Status:	Single	1
	Married in West Indies	2
	Married in U.K.	3
	Married twice	4
	No information	5
6. Occupation:	Engineering (Skilled)	1
	Engineering (Semi-skilled)	2
	Electrical (Skilled)	3
	Electrical (Semi-skilled)	4
	Building and Civil Engineering	5
	Miscellaneous	6
7. Trade Union:	A.E.U.	1
	U.B.I.S.S.S.	2
	E.T.U.	3
	None	4
	N.S.P.	5
	N.U.S.M.W.B.	6
	A.S.W.	7
	N.U.P.G.D.E.	8
	T. & G.W.U.	9
	N.U.G.M.W.	10
(a) Government Training Centre on arrival?	1. Yes (not coded)	
	2. No	
(b) Government Training Centre at a later date?	1. Yes (not coded)	
	2. No	

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<i>Code</i>		<i>Position</i>
9. (a) Course in Foremanship?	1. Yes	(not coded)
	2. No	
(b) Post-war Training Scheme?	1. Yes	(not coded)
	2. No	
Details.....		
10. Ministry of Labour Report (reduced to five point scale):		
(a) Skill and Ability at work:	Very skilled	1
	Good	2
	Average	3
	Poor	4
	Very bad workman	5
(b) Behaviour and Adjustment:	Excellent	1
	Good	2
	Average	3
	Poor, unsettled	4
	Very bad	5
11. Circumstances of Leaving Scheme:	Accepted repatriation	1
	Embarked for U.S.A., etc.	2
	Refused repatriation	3
	Joined H.M.F. or M.N.	4
	Deceased	5
	Failed to report	6

to be able to conduct a discussion class in the local community centre which was attended by many of the West Indian workers with whom this study is concerned, and also by a number of Africans and Liverpool people both coloured and white.<sup>1</sup> Although no written records were kept of these discussions they did prove an opportunity to gain an insight into the problems faced by coloured people in Liverpool and the way in which they responded to the difficulties and frustrations which they felt. It is interesting to note that for the first few months of association with this discussion group it was extremely difficult to obtain a reasoned discussion on any subject at all; the topic invariably returned to the problem of colour prejudice in Liverpool. After some time, however, the opportunity to 'blow off steam' without restraint appears to have had a therapeutic effect. In later months it was possible to conduct discussions on a very high level on subjects such as the social and economic aspects of colonial development, about which the members had a personal interest and considerable knowledge.

In addition to this background information and insight into problems and attitudes, gained through the medium of group discussion, a point was made of having a number of completely informal discussions with

<sup>1</sup> The procedure may be regarded as a form of 'functional penetration'. It enabled the writer's presence to be understood and accepted without doubts as to his motives.



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particular West Indians, in which they were encouraged to talk about themselves and their experiences since they came to this country. These interviews were conducted without notes, but were written up as soon after the interview as possible. They provided a very useful source for hypotheses and points to be checked from documentary information and further interviews.

During the early stages of the research every endeavour was made to consult welfare workers, officials and personnel managers of factories where the men had worked and so forth, in order to obtain their impression of the West Indians in Liverpool. Among others consulted were social workers, hostel wardens, private individuals who had known the West Indians and officials of the Ministry of Labour. Prominent among these informers was the late Mr. Arnold R. Watson who was in charge of the scheme for the Ministry of Labour until 1946.

The final and most important source of interview data was the 'guided interview' carried out with the direct purpose of obtaining information upon the individual West Indian. A 'guided interview' may be considered as falling between the completely informal type of interview and the use of a formal questionnaire; it combines some of the virtues of both.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty about the use of a completely informal interview technique is that whilst the spontaneity of the information is some guide to the importance of the content of the person interviewed, the time consumed in obtaining all the information required for the research is necessarily very great. On the other hand a subject such as the present one, which is very largely concerned with personal factors such as attitudes and feelings, is not suited to the use of a formal questionnaire with a predetermined set of alternative responses. The 'guided interview' is one in which a certain number of questions are designed to set the thought of the interviewed person along a particular line, but not in any way to influence the form of the answer. This provides an opportunity for exploring attitudes and opinions as well as obtaining further information. The questions were not asked in any particular chronological order nor was their form kept absolutely rigid, but wherever possible made to fit the context of the interview. Every attempt was made to make the questions as general as possible in order to prevent any particular answer being suggested to the respondent by

<sup>1</sup> The completely informal discussion is sometimes known as an 'open-ended' interview. For a discussion of interview techniques not using a questionnaire see: *'Training Guide in the use of Qualitative Interviews'* (Mimeographed) (Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, 1948).

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the wording of the questions. The following topics were explored in the course of the interviews:

(a) Employment history, attitudes towards employers, managers, fellow-workers, trade unions, etc.

(b) Places lived in; experiences in seeking accommodation; attitude towards landlords, neighbours, etc.

(c) Family, attitudes towards women; opinions about white objection to mixed marriages, etc.

(d) Recreational activities; places of entertainment usually visited; experiences of colour bar; attitude towards community centre for coloured people.

(e) General attitudes and opinions about English peoples; conditions in the Colonies; reasons for staying in U.K.

(f) Any other topics raised by the respondent.

An intensive study was made of ten men, who were interviewed for a minimum of six and a maximum of twenty hours, over a period during which the above topics were pursued. These men were chosen so that there were two for each of the five degrees of adjustment.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of these studies certain information was sought on the remaining Liverpool cases; at the minimum this consisted of place of residence, whether employed or unemployed and any police record.<sup>2</sup> Wherever possible this information was obtained by personal contact, but, in some cases, it was necessary to rely upon information obtained from friends or neighbours. In all cases Colonial Office records were consulted to provide an independent check for accuracy.

In addition every opportunity was sought to compare the experiences of the men in the scheme with the many other West Indians and other coloured people contacted at the community centre and elsewhere. Many group discussions were held in which it was possible to compare experiences and attitudes as well as provide a cross-check on factual information.

Throughout the research the procedure which may be described as that of the 'cumulative interview'<sup>3</sup> has been pursued. That is to say, every opportunity has been taken to observe the West Indians in several different social situations; in individual conversation, in group discussion, in committee meetings, social gatherings at home, at work, etc.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> See also Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> See my article in *Science News*, 27, pp. 69-92 (Penguin Books, 1953).



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This procedure enabled a composite picture to be derived which could be regarded as more reliable than from a single interview, however lengthy. In a few cases such 'cumulative interviews' have continued over a period of eighteen months. Between September 1949 and May 1951 at least twelve hours per week were spent in contact with West Indians and other coloured people in various social situations; these contacts were necessarily mainly in the evenings and at week-ends.

### *Analysis of the Data*

The analysis of the data took place in two stages. All the information obtained from documentary sources was first analysed and the interview data dealt with at a later date. The abstracts made from reports, letters, etc., were arranged according to subject-matter and examined critically with a view to observing any inconsistencies in statements of factual data, and comparing opinions, views and attitudes in the case of non-factual data. The data obtained from the individual case files were transferred to punched Hollerith cards to make the handling of statistical tables easier. In the case of the Ministry of Labour assessments of a man's skill and of his adjustment and general behaviour, these were reduced to a five-point scale by two independent assessors in order to facilitate quantitative handling. Two- and three-way statistical tables were drawn up on the basis of the quantitative data obtained from the individual case files and the cases were classified on the basis of the information, in order to discover any statistically significant relationships between certain factors such as the date of arrival, colony of origin, occupation, trade union membership, skill, adjustment, procedure on being offered repatriation, etc. Certain uniformities and significant relations were discovered by this procedure which are set out in the following chapters. Wherever possible relations, suggested by this analysis of the documentary data, were also explored in the course of the interviews in order to provide an independent check on the conclusions.

The informal discussions and interviews were written up as soon after the interview as possible. Every endeavour was made to create a full record of each interview in the context in which it was spoken. Each interview was subsequently analysed according to the subject-matter and the contents classified and filed separately.

### *Underlying of Assumptions*

The question may be raised as to the nature of any underlying

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presuppositions which may have influenced, either consciously or unconsciously, the interpretation of results; it should be stated at once that, although every endeavour was made to examine the problem at hand without prejudice and to allow the data alone to govern conclusions, certain value judgements have undoubtedly existed and must be stated. Others may decide the extent to which, if at all, these value judgements have influenced the research.

Firstly, any interpretation of West Indian behaviour which is based upon any assumption of inherited inferiority of mental capacities among the Negro peoples, or the children of mixed racial parentage, was rejected. This is a view that claims the support of a considerable body of scientific anthropological and psychological data.<sup>1</sup> For this reason the writer has felt no need to question the presupposition. It has, however, always been borne in mind that the West Indians coming to this country are in fact a highly selective group. They are not necessarily representative of the West Indian peoples as a whole.

Secondly, no personal difficulty was felt about entering into normal social relationships with Negroes. Any person who does find such difficulty, and who expresses consequent unwillingness to accept Negroes in all the circumstances in which he or she would accept a white person, is regarded as being the victim of a racial prejudice. This may have its origin in some aspect of the individual's life history, or in the social conditions arising in an environment in which Negroes are not accepted as equals. The author does not accept any explanation of racial antipathy which is based upon concept of inherited instincts and this view is also supported by sociological and psychological research.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Klineberg, O., *Race Differences* (Harper, New York, 1935).

<sup>2</sup> Horowitz, R. L., 'Development of Attitudes Towards the Negro', *Readings in Social Psychology*, ed. Newcomb, T. M., Hartley, B. L., pp. 517 *et seq.* (Holt, New York, 1947).

## CHAPTER II

### RACIAL RELATIONS IN BRITAIN AND U.S.A.

#### 1. CONTRASTS WITH THE UNITED STATES

**R**ELATIONSHIPS between Negroes in England and the white population present a number of interesting contrasts and comparisons with the situation in the United States of America. In the first instance the size of the coloured population in Britain is comparatively speaking very small. In the United States today the Negro population is approximately 13,000,000 or nearly 10 per cent of the total population and in some states in the south the proportion is much greater. The size of the coloured population in England cannot be given accurately, as no separate records of Negroes or other coloured people are kept. Estimates vary, but an outside figure would put the total Negro population permanently resident in Great Britain at 50,000 or only one in ten thousand of the total population. Until recently the Negro population has been concentrated in four of the main ports each with between five and ten thousand Negroes. In these localities the proportion increases to a maximum of 1 per cent of the population. It is quite possible therefore in England for a white person never to meet a Negro and rarely to give any thought to what his reactions would be if he did.

The second important contrast with the American situation is that the Negro population in Britain is of very recent immigrant origin. In the United States the Negroes, as descendants of the original slaves, can claim to be among the earliest inhabitants, apart from the indigenous Indian population. In Britain the Negro population has arisen almost entirely in the twentieth century. The number of Negroes resident in Britain before that date was infinitesimal. The first influx of any size occurred after the first world war, when Negroes were discharged from His Majesty's Forces and from the Merchant Navy and settled in the United Kingdom. Even then the number of adult male Negroes in



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Liverpool (with which city this study is primarily concerned) before the second world war was estimated to be only in the region of five hundred. A further influx in rather larger numbers occurred during and after the second world war. This is illustrated in the graph below.

It follows from this recent immigrant origin of the Negro population that the coloured population is culturally 'alien' in English society. This is in contrast to the situation in the United States, where the Negro is culturally speaking thoroughly American. The first and second generation of descendants of the original Negro immigrants to Britain are of course similarly English in their education and cultural background, but

NUMBER OF ADULT MALE NEGROES ON MERSEYSIDE,  
1930-1950.

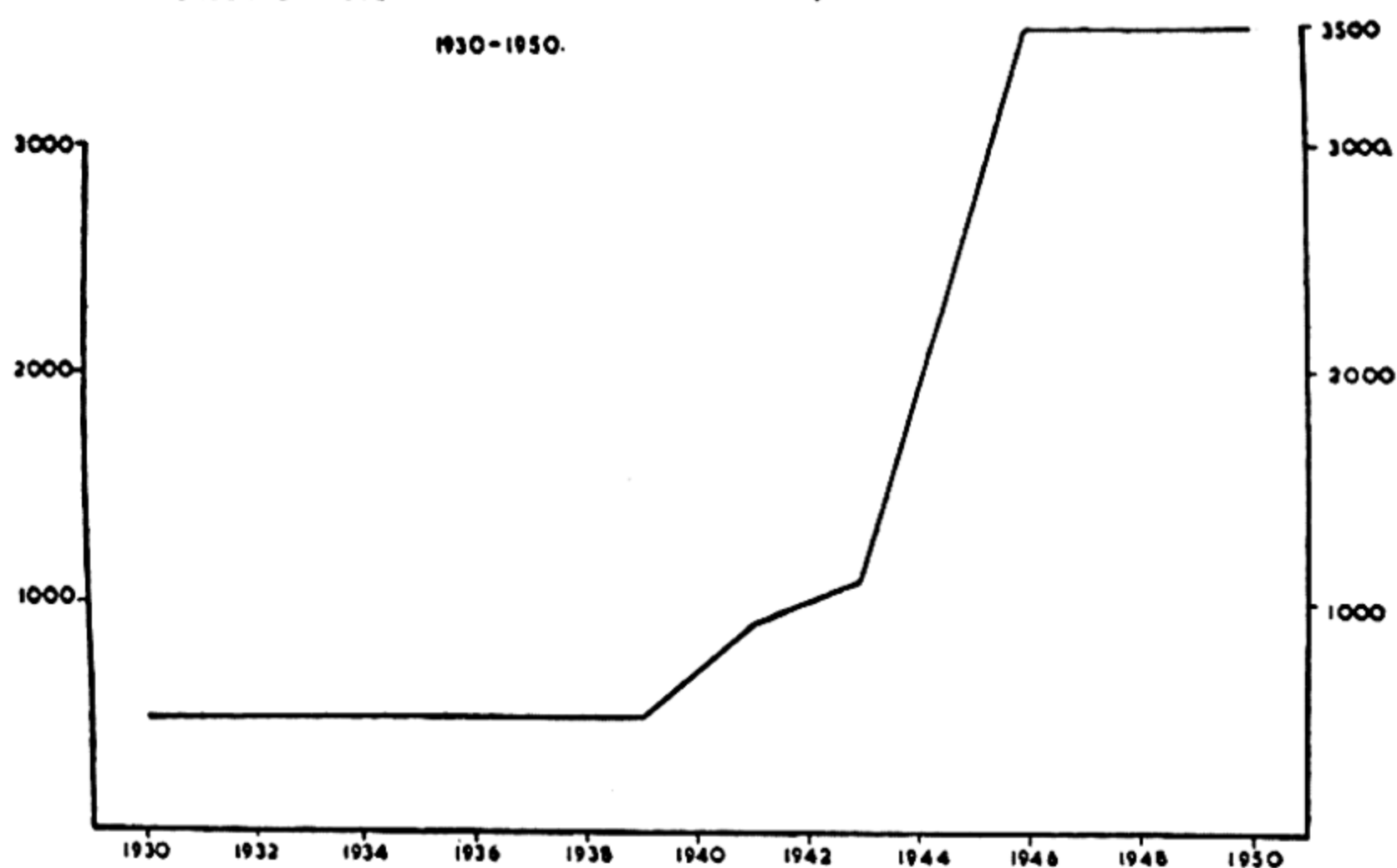


DIAGRAM 1

these are only a small proportion of the total Negro population. In any case the relatively infrequent sight of a Negro in Britain means that even the English-born coloured person tends to be thought of by many as a 'foreigner'. The West Indian Negro immigrant has of course an advantage over the African immigrant in so far as his own cultural background is much more europeanised and anglicised than is the case of the African colonies. The West Indian's native language is English and his education has been modelled upon the English system. But the African has usually acquired English as a second language and his educational attainments vary a great deal.

The Negro population in Britain is therefore culturally heterogeneous in character, from various islands in the West Indies or from any of a

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number of tribes and colonies in Africa, but having children who have grown up in England. In contrast the Negroes in the United States (apart from differences which arise from local and regional cultural differences in the United States itself) form culturally a homogeneous group.

A further and important point of contrast between the situation in Britain and in the United States arises in connection with the question of miscegenation. In the first instance the majority of immigrants have been males with the result that miscegenation necessarily takes place—because there are relatively few coloured women. Furthermore it is the male Negro who marries or cohabits with the white woman; the children of mixed descent therefore have a white mother and a coloured father, which is not the normal situation in America. More will be said about this in the course of the report.

### 2. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES

Despite these important differences between the situation in England and America a number of interesting similarities exist in the pattern of relationships between the two groups. Just as in the United States the 'American creed' supports racial equality and condemns prejudice and discrimination, so in England the Christian/humanist ideal, which is supported by the common law, is that the British colonial Negro is entitled to all the privileges and rights of an English person. Discrimination against Negroes is frowned upon and the equality of coloured and white people upheld. Nevertheless despite this ideal there are many stereotypes of a derogatory character about the Negro which are widely held. Furthermore, as will be shown in the course of this report, prejudice and discrimination against Negroes do often occur.

Another similarity with the American situation is the tendency for the coloured population to live in a particular part of the city. This partial segregation is not as complete as it is, for instance, in Harlem, but there is a definite tendency for the coloured population to congregate in a particular part of the city, owing to the difficulty experienced in finding accommodation elsewhere. In the south end of Liverpool, for example, there are a few streets that may be as much as two-thirds occupied by coloured families. In others half the houses may have coloured families, and on the outskirts of the south end the proportions may be reversed and only about one-third of the families will be coloured. In the rest of the city there may be an occasional coloured

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family or a house that has been taken over by a number of coloured men, but this is very rare. In other towns such as Cardiff the segregational tendency is even more prominent owing to the fact that the dockland area where most of the coloured families live is actually cut off physically from the rest of the city by railways and canals.<sup>1</sup>

A further factor in common between Britain and America is the question of economic competition between Negroes and whites. The resentment expressed against the Negro immigrants after the first world war and since appears to have been largely economic in character.<sup>2</sup> This question will be further discussed in the course of this report.

### 3. RACIAL RELATIONS IN LIVERPOOL BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

This study is primarily concerned with racial relations in Liverpool after the arrival of the first contingent of West Indian workers in February 1941.<sup>3</sup> However, in order to understand what has occurred since that date, it is necessary to outline briefly the main characteristics of the relations between coloured and white people prior to the arrival of this new immigrant group. The response of many white people in Liverpool to the West Indians was already conditioned by the attitudes that had grown up, in the period between the two world wars, to the small Negro population that lived in the city at that time; this conditioned response provided the frame of reference within which the new arrivals tended to be judged.

*Population of Liverpool.* The population of Merseyside, and Liverpool especially, is noted for its heterogeneous character. The city has grown enormously in the last hundred years, largely as a result of immigration from other parts of England, from Wales, Ireland and a number of countries overseas.<sup>4</sup> Whilst the various elements have fused together and the resulting inter-mixture has acquired a character and a mode of speech that is unmistakably that of Merseyside, the diverse nature of the population has led to the formation of several clearly marked in-group/out-group delineations. There is considerable consciousness of national origin, especially among Irish and Welsh; the latter retain

<sup>1</sup> Little, K. L., *Negroes in Britain* (Kegan Paul, London, 1948).

<sup>2</sup> Richmond, A. H., 'Economic Insecurity and Stereotypes as Factors in Colour Prejudice', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XLII, Section 8, 1950.

<sup>3</sup> The present writer has discussed the question of racial relations in Liverpool before 1939 much more fully elsewhere. See 'Racial Relations in England', *The Mid-West Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Summer, 1951.

<sup>4</sup> Walshaw, R. S., and Jones, D. Caradog, *Migration to and from Merseyside* (University Press of Liverpool, 1938).



their own distinctive language. Religious differences also divide people: there have, at times, been outbreaks of serious anti-semitic feeling and the traditional Protestant-Catholic antagonisms are more marked in Liverpool than in most towns in Britain today.

Added to this complex pattern of group relations among the 'European' elements in the population has been the arrival, since 1918, of increasing numbers of non-European immigrants. The numbers have never been large, but the high visibility of 'coloured' people has made their presence more noticeable than otherwise would have been the case. Before the second world war the Chinese and Negro populations were each little more than one in a thousand of the total population: even in the present day the total Negro population is less than 1 per cent of the population of Liverpool. Nevertheless the Negro immigrants began to be regarded with suspicion and hostility soon after their discharge from the armed forces and the Merchant Navy in 1919. Serious disturbances broke out at this time between whites and Negroes. Public opinion strongly favoured the repatriation of Negroes to the Colonies and many in fact were persuaded to return. Others insisted upon their rights as British subjects to remain and settle in England.

*Stereotype of the Liverpool Negro.* The existence of the Negro minority in Liverpool formed an out-group whose presence was regarded as an actual or a potential threat to the security (especially in terms of competition for employment) of the white population. It is not surprising therefore that stereotyped opinions about the Negro grew up which pictured him as an undesirable person who was a source of discredit to the city. Attempts were made to prevent further Negro immigration and to encourage the replacement of coloured firemen by white on British ships.<sup>1</sup> Economic factors alone seem to have prevented this policy from being practised.

There grew up in Liverpool a widespread conception of the Negro as a person of low social status, little skill and doubtful moral habits. Although this view could certainly not be applied to the majority of Negroes in Liverpool it did not prevent this belief from being widely accepted; this was largely as a result of the publicity given to particular instances of Negro misdemeanours in the press and the reports of well-meaning social workers and the like who failed to diagnose certain behaviour and conditions of life as the product of a poor environment, rather than inherited defects in the Negro himself.

<sup>1</sup> See Fletcher, M. E., *An Investigation into the Colour Problem in Liverpool and other Ports*, p. 38 (Association for the Welfare of Half-Caste Children, Liverpool, 1930).

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*Economic insecurity on Merseyside.* Mention has already been made of the unemployment in Liverpool and the surrounding area between the two world wars. This has always made the absorption of newcomers a difficult process:

'In spite of recent indications of trade revival on Merseyside, there are in most classes of employment limits to the amount of new labour which can be satisfactorily absorbed. When a newcomer takes up employment in the area it does not necessarily follow that a long settled resident immediately loses his job. But unemployment figures clearly indicate that in certain types of work the labour market is congested. Recent migration movements therefore have an important bearing on the social problems now confronting Merseyside.'<sup>1</sup>

The main characteristic of Merseyside is its dependence upon overseas trade for its prosperity. The predominating industries have always been those connected with shipping, shipbuilding and transport. After the first world war the area was severely affected by the world wide depressions of the 1920's and 1930's. This was aggravated by the local effects of the casual labour system in the docks. Unemployment figures were among the largest in the country and there was the usual unrest associated with a depressed area.<sup>2</sup>

The unemployment on Merseyside during the 1930's created widespread feelings of insecurity which were associated with the severe competition for limited employment. Attitudes towards Irish immigrants as well as coloured workers appear to have been governed by this fear of competition. The employment of the West Indian Negro in English factories, doing skilled work and on the same footing as English workers, was a process that would have been quite out of the question in the pre-war period.

The position changed rapidly with the onset of the war. The slack of unemployment on Merseyside, as everywhere else in this country, was quickly taken up: seamen were urgently required to man the convoys across the Atlantic; for the first time the coloured man was able to take his place alongside the white, as a member of the Merchant Navy receiving the same rates of pay, even though there were still restrictions on the ranks that could be held by Negroes in the Merchant Service. In industry the demand for workers of all grades was such that capable hands were needed to do a job whatever their colour might be. Merseyside had always lacked a sufficient body of men with engineering skill,

<sup>1</sup> Walshaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> See Jones, D. Caradog, *Handbook of Social Statistics Relating to Merseyside* (University Press of Liverpool, 1938), and Oakshott, W. F., *et al. Men Without Work* (Cambridge University Press, 1938).



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owing to the relatively restricted nature of its general industries, other than those connected with shipping, shipbuilding and transport. The demand for munitions for the war led to the building of many factories, devoted to war production, on the trading estates that had been set up on the outskirts of Liverpool; this in its turn led to a great demand for skilled workers of all kinds who could run and maintain the machines that were being installed. It was this situation which encouraged the Ministry of Labour to direct into the Merseyside area skilled workers who were refugees from Europe, as well as the West Indian volunteers when they came to this country.

## CHAPTER III

### IMMIGRATION SCHEME FOR WEST INDIAN WORKERS

THE West Indians with whom this study is mainly concerned came to this country under a scheme organised jointly by the Ministry of Labour and the Colonial Office, with the object of increasing production, strengthening the bonds between Great Britain and the West Indies, and making a small contribution towards relieving the unemployment in these Colonies.<sup>1</sup> In Jamaica and other islands of the West Indies men were eager to offer their services to the 'Mother Country'. At that time there were few openings in the armed forces but it was felt that the Colonies could help to fill the urgent need for skilled workers in the factories. The view that Merseyside was relatively familiar with the idea of coloured workers resulted in a policy of employing the majority of the men in this area; later men were employed in Manchester, Bolton, and the surrounding district as well. For administrative convenience it was decided that the men should be kept in the area of the North-west Regional Office, where they could receive the benefits of the special welfare provisions which were available.

#### 1. ADMINISTRATION AND WELFARE

The volunteers were selected by the authorities in the West Indies and provided with a passage to England and the guarantee of free passage home again at the end of the war. As British subjects the men were not of course compelled to accept this offer of repatriation, and many in fact did refuse the option, preferring to take their chance of

<sup>1</sup> The only other men to come to England under a special scheme were a number from British Honduras, experienced in the lumber industry, who worked with the Forestry Commission in Scotland. The number of workers coming to England was very small compared with those proceeding under special schemes to the United States. See Stockdale, Sir F., *Development and Welfare in the British West Indies*, p. 2, para. 7 (London, H.M.S.O., 1945).

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employment in England. Others during the course of their stay in Britain enlisted in the Forces or joined the Merchant Navy, in which some are still serving; a few have made their way to the United States or Canada. It is estimated that about one-third of the original volunteers are still living in Britain, or are attached to the Forces or the Merchant Navy. Since the war they have dispersed throughout the country, although a large proportion have remained in the Liverpool area.<sup>1</sup>

The men arrived in England in eleven separate contingents, five from Jamaica, the rest from British Honduras, the Bahamas, Barbados, British Guiana, the Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands. The first three contingents from Jamaica were regarded as technicians who had had their training and experience in the Colony and were able to proceed straight to work in the factories; the remaining contingents were of men who, although they may have had some experience at home, were relatively unskilled on arrival, and these were sent for varying periods to one of the Government Training Centres. There they received a basic training in a particular branch of engineering and were then drafted to the factories as semi-skilled workers.

From the very beginning of the scheme it was recognised that special provision would have to be made for the welfare of the men. The Colonial Office was aware of the possible political repercussion if their reception was not a cordial one. On the other hand thinking people on Merseyside, who were aware of the problems of the existing coloured population, were also anxious. The Association for the Welfare of Coloured People (primarily a white organisation) addressed a letter to the Colonial Office which was subsequently passed on to the responsible authorities in the Ministry of Labour. Referring to the imminent arrival of the first contingent of technicians from Jamaica, the letter expressed concern at the possibility of a repetition of the events after the first world war and hoped that, if Colonial workers were to be employed in Britain, special welfare provisions would be made.

The Ministry of Labour did set up special machinery and the men were under the jurisdiction of a Welfare Officer and his assistants. The man appointed by the Ministry of Labour to take charge of the scheme as a whole at Regional Office had previously been engaged upon an enquiry into alleged discrimination against coloured British subjects in the offices of the department; this had been undertaken in 1940 at the instigation of the Colonial Office. The Ministry of Labour next

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 172.

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appointed a well-known West Indian cricketer as Welfare Officer. The devotion to the interests and welfare of his fellow countrymen subsequently earned this official the M.B.E. He was later assisted in Liverpool by another West Indian. Another assistant took charge of the welfare of the men in the Manchester and Bolton areas.

All these appointments showed considerable foresight on the part of the Ministry of Labour and a determination that they themselves would set the example to the employers in refusing to allow prejudice to influence their appointment of the best man for the job, irrespective of his colour. The Welfare Officer undoubtedly held the confidence both of the Ministry, and what is equally important, of the men themselves. This fact was a major influence in maintaining the scheme in face of the numerous difficulties that were encountered.

The duties of the Welfare Officer were not limited to the relations of the men with the managements and employees of the factories in which they worked. The Ministry, later in conjunction with the Colonial Office, were responsible for the running of several hostels; the Welfare Officer also concerned himself with the many personal and family problems affecting the men, and the Ministry organised an expatriation-grant scheme which was administered through the Welfare Office. At times the settling of differences between the men and their employers or other workers in the firm required the utmost tact and patience; it was necessary to understand, not only the point of view of the West Indians, but also of the other parties concerned in the dispute, including trade unions, employers and the like.

The Welfare Officer paid frequent visits to all the places of employment and as well as meeting the management received reports from the man appointed to represent the West Indians in the factory. He also visited the hostels, and each man was required to report, in writing or in person, to the Welfare Officer at least once a month. The confidence in which the Welfare Officer was held is indicated by the frequency with which the men turned to him for advice and assistance whenever any difficulty occurred, particularly if it seemed to be an example of colour prejudice or discrimination. Visits of inspection were made from time to time by important officials from the International Labour Office and the Colonial Office.

### 2. WEST INDIAN TECHNICIANS AND TRAINEES

The most outstanding characteristic of the West Indian workers who came to this country under the official scheme was their extreme



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diversity in almost every characteristic and quality. The background of the men varied a great deal. Many of those from Jamaica came from Kingston and were familiar with urban life and factory work. Many of the later arrivals had come from an essentially rural environment and varying degrees of poverty and distress according to the island from which they came. The men varied greatly in appearance: some were very dark and of almost pure Negro descent; others were very light skinned, although few would have passed entirely for white, as hair texture and bone structure usually indicated Negro inheritance. Educa-

TABLE 1  
*West Indian Technicians and Trainees*

<i>Contingent</i>	<i>Date of Arrival</i>	<i>Colony of Origin</i>	<i>Number in Contingent</i>	<i>Area in which first employed</i>	
1	February 1941	Jamaica	51	Merseyside	} Technicians
2	February 1941	Jamaica	66	Merseyside	
3	August 1941	Jamaica	71	Merseyside	
4	June 1942	Brit. Honduras	20	Manchester	} Trainees
5	June 1942	Jamaica	2	Manchester	
6	October 1942	Bahamas	17	Bolton	
7	November 1942	Jamaica	49	Bolton	
8	November 1942	Barbados	16	Manchester	
9	November 1942	Brit. Guiana	20	Merseyside	
10	December 1942	Leeward Is.	20	Merseyside	
11	January 1943	Windward Is.	13	Merseyside	

tional qualifications varied a great deal as did skill and qualifications, which will be discussed later. Age varied from one or two who were under twenty to some over sixty on arrival!

Table 1 sets out the different contingents, the places from which they came and the towns in which they were first employed.

Tables 2 and 3<sup>1</sup> set out the occupational distribution of the first three

<sup>1</sup> Although 345 men arrived in this country under the scheme, 7 were suspended as a result of joining the Merchant Navy or finding other employment very soon after arrival and have not therefore been included in this study at all. Of the remaining 338, the records of the Ministry of Labour relating to one technician and 28 trainees were not sufficient for the statistical information relating to them to be compiled. The statistical tables which follow cover, therefore, a total of 309 men. What information there is available regarding the missing cases suggests that they are not in any way unusual and it is unlikely that their absence has materially influenced the conclusions drawn from the data.

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contingents of Jamaicans who were the technicians who were supposed to have received their experience and training before coming to this country. But it came to light that a considerable number of men had succeeded in convincing the authorities of their qualifications when in fact they had had little or no experience at all. On arrival here such men tended to justify their behaviour by claiming their earnest desire to

TABLE 2

### *Occupations of Jamaican Technicians*

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Engineering (Skilled)</i>	<i>Engineering (Semi- skilled)</i>	<i>Electrical Trades (Skilled)</i>	<i>Electrical Trades (Semi- skilled)</i>	<i>Building and Civil Engineer- ing</i>	<i>Total</i>
Welder	22	—	—	—	—	22
Turner	3	3	—	—	—	6
Fitter	52	11	2	—	—	65
Electrician	—	—	18	2	—	20
Motor Mechanic	—	28	—	—	—	28
Machine Setter	—	20	—	—	—	20
Machinist	2	5	—	—	—	7
Blacksmith	3	—	—	—	—	3
Tool and Gauge Maker	1	—	—	—	—	1
Miller and Turner	—	1	—	—	—	1
Pipe Fitter	—	—	—	—	1	1
Painter	—	—	—	—	1	1
Sheet Metal Worker	2	—	—	—	—	2
Joiner	—	—	—	—	2	2
Plumber	—	—	—	—	1	1
<i>Total</i>	85	68	20	2	5	180*

\* Eight cases unclassified.

'help the Mother Country'. In fact, apart from their desire for adventure the main motive governing the men who came to this country appears to have been the prospects of regular employment at rates of pay considerably above those which they could hope to obtain at home. For the purposes of this study the different occupations have been classified under six headings: Engineering (skilled), Engineering (semi-skilled), Electrical trades (skilled), Electrical trades (semi-skilled), Building and Civil Engineering; and a number of the trainees have

## IMMIGRATION SCHEME FOR WEST INDIAN WORKERS

been classified as Miscellaneous, including clerical, etc. In Table 2 the classification as used by the Ministry of Labour is set out in the left-hand column, and the classification used in this study on the right. Where similar occupations have been classified as either skilled or semi-skilled, evidence of having served a full apprenticeship or of having been accepted as a grade one member by the appropriate trade union was required before the individual was classified as skilled. All other cases and any where there was an element of doubt were classified as semi-skilled.

TABLE 3  
*Distribution of Occupations by Contingents  
Jamaican Technicians*

Contingent	Engineering				Electrical Trades			Building and Civil Engineering	Total	
	Skilled		Semi-skilled		Skilled		Semi-skilled			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.	No.	%
1	23	45	20	39	4	8	2	2	51	100
2	33	57	19	33	5	9	—	1	58	100
3	29	41	29	41	11	16	—	2	71	100
Total	85	47	68	38	20	11	2	5	180*	100

\* Eight cases unclassified.

The technicians were drafted on arrival to the three Royal Ordnance (Government) Factories in the area and to one or two private firms engaged upon war production. The numbers at each factory varied from half dozen to fifty at one time.

Contingents 4 to 11 were regarded as trainees who came to this country with little or no experience. These men were put through a short course of specialised training at a Government Training Centre for a period of approximately sixteen weeks. The men were taught a number of specialised tasks such as milling, grinding, capstan lathe work, fitting, drilling, boring, welding, electrical fitting, or aircraft detail fitting, etc. After this course they were drafted to one of the factories in the Manchester, Bolton or Liverpool areas in groups of between ten and twenty men.



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## 3. QUALIFICATIONS OF JAMAICAN TECHNICIANS

The heterogeneous nature of the immigrant group has already been referred to and the occupations represented among the Jamaicans have been set out in Table 2. The broad division between skilled and semi-skilled which has been made on the basis of the occupational description and the knowledge of the man's apprenticeship or lack of it tends to obscure the actual range of skills and abilities that existed. As has been pointed out some of the men had served full apprenticeships and had had long experience in factories in Jamaica. There were, however, a number of the Jamaicans in the early contingents who succeeded in bluffing the authorities responsible for administering trade tests before embarkation. Some had a rudimentary knowledge, and by discovering the nature of the tests succeeded in convincing the examiners of their skill; others actually persuaded a more skilled man to do the test for them in return for a suitable fee, and in the name of the would-be emigrant. As a result of this doubtful procedure a few of the so-called technicians arrived in this country without any engineering knowledge or skill at all: such men were, of course, a small minority, but their presence, when discovered, did cause the Ministry of Labour more than a little concern. Whilst it was possible to place in semi-skilled employment those whose knowledge was elementary in the expectation that by specialisation their skill would come up to standard, the men with no experience at all tended to be those who left the scheme at an early date and joined the Merchant Navy or the Forces.

It had been hoped that all the first party of technicians would be taken by one particular firm that had already employed a number of skilled Poles and Belgians. This firm, however, claimed that it could only use men experienced in up-to-date engineering practice in connection with the production of high-class precision instruments. Eighteen of the original party were also rejected by one of the Royal Ordnance factories as having insufficient skill or not possessing the particular kind of experience required. Another firm, whose demand for labour was acute, came to the rescue and accepted the men *en bloc*, irrespective of their skill.

The apprehension of the Ministry of Labour with regard to the skill of these early arrivals was confirmed by a report of a Labour Supply Inspector<sup>1</sup> a few weeks later after the second contingent had arrived.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Watson, Arnold R., in *West Indian Workers in Great Britain*, p. 9 (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1942).



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It was found that there were twelve really good tradesmen at one firm but that the remaining thirty-four had insufficient skill and had to be put to work as electricians' or fitters' 'mates'. Referring to machinists, electricians and other workers the Inspector wrote:

'I think I would be right in referring to them as mixed, as their skill varies considerably. As might be expected the degree of adaptation by the Jamaicans in this category (machinists) to the work required of them here is directly influenced by the training each of them has received in Jamaica. Here we are possibly more inclined to regard men as Operators of a particular machine, especially in these days of emergency training where men have been given specialised instruction in Centre Lathe Operating, Milling, Grinding, Shaping and so on, and it is only in the case of a skilled man of the 'old school'—Toolroom workers for example—that skill in accurate working of a number of these machines is expected.

'At any rate, the placing in steady employment of Jamaicans classed as machinists, has presented difficulties, and in trying to analyse the cause of this I have arrived at the following conclusion. Many of the men have been brought up in the Railway shops and in the Machine shops of other industrial establishments. Obviously they are not skilled Centre Lathe Turners or Engine Fitters according to our standards; one is driven to the conclusion (to some extent confirmed by the men themselves) that they may have been engaged on repair and maintenance work of a rougher type, where tolerances are not too fine. Generally speaking they try hard, but the percentage of successes is unfortunately not high; consequently, many engaged on work of a semi-skilled nature, work which we should expect to come within the scope of a Government Training Centre trainee.

'With regard to the Electricians, here again we have a percentage of men not so highly skilled according to the requirements of the industry in this country; but the majority are certainly able to hold their own, and from conversations I have had and observations made, they appear to be keen and adaptable. There has not been any difficulty in keeping them fully employed, although selection has had to be made here and there to suitable employment for the few who fell short of the required standard. This standard, by the way, is high, as you are doubtless aware.

'Pipe Fitters have presented a slight difficulty, owing again to the difference in the type of work to which they have been accustomed. I think I am right in saying, however, that they are all now in what we hope will be steady employment.

'A number of Loco Fitters were included in the parties brought over, and the placing of these men became a problem as demands were few. Those left over were "converted" into Millwrights and Maintenance Fitters—a tribute, I would say, to their adaptability.'

### 4. QUALIFICATIONS OF WEST INDIAN TRAINEES

The majority of the West Indian trainees had not had industrial experience before coming to this country and were on the same footing

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as any English worker put through the normal course of training at a Government Training Centre. The general impression seems to have been that these men showed up favourably against any comparable group of English workers. The following extract from a report of Major G. St. J. Orde-Browne upon the contingent from British Honduras when they were in training would appear to be typical:

'These men, it should be remembered, are not qualified artificers, but were recruited chiefly on account of character and desire to join; British Honduras is of course unable to produce many artisans, so they were asked to send their best men, without regard to qualification. In view of their lack of experience, they have been organised in a learner's course at the Government Training Centre, where they are receiving a most thorough training, though in a surprisingly short time. I visited them at work, and also spent some time at their hostel, discussing their experiences with them. Those in charge of them in all cases spoke most highly of them and they seem to have made a good impression both for behaviour and for capacity and anxiety to learn. The training is an all-round one, starting with the use of the simplest tools and extending to the control of various lathes and metal-working machines. In particular, they are required to work to a high standard of performance, a most desirable experience for any pupil from the Caribbean colonies, where slovenliness and careless finish often form such regrettable features of the local work. Filing practice concluded with the usual apprentice tasks of fitting a piece to fill a template and so forth; those which I saw tested on a light-box showed a high degree of performance. Manipulation of a turret lathe, precision grinding, and similar operations, figured later in the course; I was glad to note the insistence on the appropriate lubricant for the material being worked, in contrast with the workshops of the West Indies where one may see paraffin, oil, or emulsion being used indifferently for copper, aluminium, vulcanite, etc., the necessary change being too much trouble. Precision work was carried out to an accuracy of 1/2,000, and micrometer gauges were in use working to an accuracy of one ten-thousandth. Every man is trained to grind all tools in use, and maintenance of equipment is made a matter of importance. I regretted the absence of all training with hot metal, the nearest approach to such work being the skinning of castings, in so far as this can be regarded as reflecting foundry work; for general workshop practice of a simple nature, some knowledge of the forge would be very useful. The training given, however, had of necessity to be of a somewhat specialised nature, to fit the men for early employment on armament work, so one could hardly expect a comprehensive course. Generally the Hondurians appear to make progress as good as, if not better than, the equivalent European, whilst they seemed to be valued by their instructors, and liked by their fellow workers.'

While many of the trainees acquired a high degree of skill on a narrow range of operations, there were, naturally, very few who acquired an all-round experience and skill comparable with men who had served their apprenticeships.

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## 5. SUBSEQUENT ASSESSMENT OF SKILL

The above descriptions of the skill of technicians and trainees relate to the position soon after their arrival. It is clear that with further experience in this country the skills shown by the men would improve and it would be possible to make a truer assessment of their real ability. Before the official scheme was wound up the Welfare Officer made a report upon the skill of each man based upon the report he received from

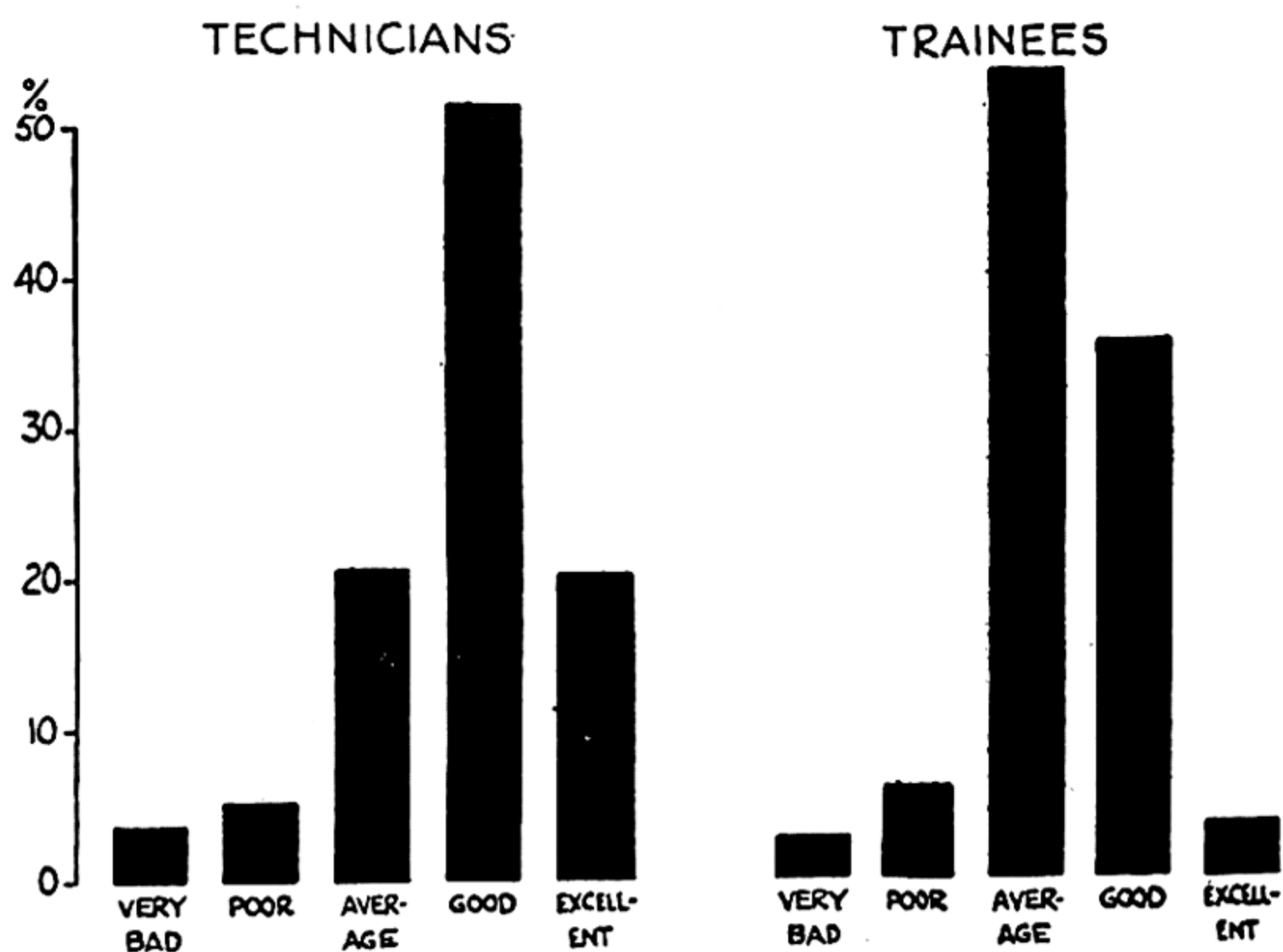


DIAGRAM 2. DISTRIBUTION OF SKILL RATINGS

employers, foremen, charge-hands, etc., and from his own observations of the men over a period of some four years. These reports have been reduced for the purpose of the present enquiry to a five-point scale.<sup>1</sup> The distribution of these assessments is shown in Diagram 2 and in Table 4. For this purpose the term 'skill' has been taken to mean the man's general work ability and knowledge with regard to his particular trade, as demonstrated by his workmanship over a period of approximately four years.

<sup>1</sup> These assessments of skill, and also those of adjustment made later, were reduced to a five-point scale by the writer and a colleague working separately. Disagreement occurred in 5 per cent of cases and the ranking in those instances agreed after discussion of the case. Since these scales were drawn up they have been seen by the Ministry Welfare Officer who was responsible for the original reports, who has expressed the view that they represent a very true picture of the situation as he knew it.



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It is interesting to notice the difference in the distribution of skill between the technicians and trainees. As might be expected the proportion of very highly skilled men is much higher among the technicians. At the other end of the scale, however, when poor and very bad skill ratings are added together the percentage (7 per cent) is the same for both technicians and trainees.

TABLE 4

## *Skill and Ability of West Indians Technicians and Trainees*

<i>Contingent</i>	<i>Very Skilled</i>		<i>Good</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Poor</i>		<i>Very Bad</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1	9	18	29	57	9	18	2	4	2	4	51	100
2	15	26	24	41	15	26	2	3	2	3	58	100
3	12	17	40	56	13	18	4	6	2	3	71	100
<i>All Technicians</i>	36	20	93	52	37	21	8	4	6	3	180	100
<i>All Trainees</i>	4	3	46	36	69	54	7	5	3	2	129	100
<i>Total</i>	40	13	139	45	106	34	15	5	9	3	309*	100

\* Thirty-six cases unclassified.

In order to provide some indication of the reliability of the two measures of skill used in this study, the two classifications have been set against each other; that is to say the five-point scale has been reduced for this purpose to a twofold division of those scoring above average skill, and those scoring average or below. If the two classifications—the one based on occupation and the other on the Ministry assessments—are in fact measuring the same factor of skill, a close relation between these two assessments would be expected. A perfect correlation would not be expected since it is obvious that the Ministry's assessments are more likely to indicate trainees who acquired a considerable degree of skill rapidly through their own inherent capacity, and the technicians



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who, in spite of having in some cases the advantage of apprenticeship, did not necessarily possess greater innate ability. The two measures are set out in Table 5. This suggests that in fact there is a high degree of association between the two assessments. A chi-squared analysis of this distribution shows that this relationship is statistically significant ( $P < .01$ ).

TABLE 5

### *Relation Between Two Measures of Skill*

<i>Occupational Status</i>	<i>Skill Ranking</i>					
	<i>Very skilled, Good</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Average Poor and Very Bad</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Skilled Worker	83	77.5	24	22.5	107	100
Semi-skilled	96	47.5	106	52.5	202	100
<i>Total</i>	179	58	130	42	309*	100

\* Thirty-six cases unclassified.

To sum up this discussion of the qualifications of the West Indians, the consensus of opinion among employers appears to be

(a) that there were one or two outstanding men on the scheme whose skill equalled or surpassed that of any English tradesmen in their employ:

(b) that the majority of the men were of average ability on arrival; in particular they lacked experience in working with a micrometer to such fine limits as was expected in factories in this country:

(c) that while many of the men were quick to learn, there were others who were most satisfactory if put to work on one job in which they could acquire proficiency by repetition:

(d) in some cases the men did not seem to be able to adapt themselves to the tempo of work expected in Britain; this may have been due to the unfamiliarity of some of them with the work required, because in one instance—where motor mechanics worked upon the Ford type of vehicle with which they were very familiar—the employer remarked that the Jamaican workers were much speedier than his own regular employees.

## CHAPTER IV

# EMPLOYMENT OF WEST INDIAN NEGROES

### 1. RESISTANCE TO EMPLOYMENT OF NEGROES

IT was pointed out in Chapter 1 that discrimination against coloured people in industry, before the second world war, was widespread but that the state of full employment which had come by 1940 created an enormous demand for labour. Employers could no longer afford to be too concerned about the colour of the hands doing the work. Nevertheless, there were one or two firms which expressed doubts about the employment of the West Indian workers, when first approached by the Ministry of Labour. One firm had unfortunate experiences with African labourers who had worked for them during the first world war, and had not employed coloured persons since that time. This firm was reluctant to repeat the experiment but was eventually persuaded to accept several of the West Indian technicians who had come over on the scheme. These appear to have proved fairly satisfactory with the result that the firm also took on several other coloured workers who had not been sent by the Ministry; the latter group do not appear to have sustained the reputation earned by the first arrivals and once more the firm expressed doubts about the employment of coloured workers in general.

Another firm reflected a typical stereotype of the unskilled coloured worker when they replied to the Ministry's offer by saying, 'We regret we cannot accept your offer of a number of West Indian natives.' In fact, when it was made clear that the men in question were skilled technicians a number were accepted and settled well at the firm. Even though there was this initial resistance to the employment of the West Indians among several firms, the demand for labour at that time was so great that little difficulty was found in finding alternative placings. As labour became more and more scarce even those firms that had at first refused to employ coloured workers later relented.

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## 2. DIRECTION OF LABOUR

There was no equivalent in Great Britain of the Fair Employment Practices Committee which in the United States served to protect the rights and interests of minority groups and the Negro in particular. Through the organisation of the F.E.P.C. it was possible for a Negro, who considered that he had suffered unjust discrimination with regard to employment, to have his case considered and investigated by an impartial committee before whom both plaintiff and defendant would be required to bring evidence. The Committee was armed with serious penalties if discrimination was proved, although its clauses were seldom invoked. The effectiveness of the measures appears to have been due to the vigilance of its staff and the fear of unfavourable publicity on the part of the firms concerned, especially where there was a risk of losing a large war-time contract.

The Ministry of Labour in Britain during the war was, however, provided with one weapon which it could if necessary use against employers who would otherwise have discriminated against Negroes. This was the Essential Works and Control of Engagements Orders. By virtue of these war-time measures it was possible for the Ministry to direct a man to employment in a particular industry. If he had the requisite qualification the employer was required to accept him and he in his turn was under an obligation to accept the employment. These orders were designed to deal with the urgent man-power situation in general and were not drafted with Negroes, or any other minority group, in mind. They did, however, assist the officials of the Ministry in their task of dealing with employers who showed any tendency to discriminate.

The powers for the direction of labour that the Ministry then possessed undoubtedly made their task easier and enabled them to overcome the hesitation of firms who were uncertain whether or not to take coloured workers. After that it depended more than anything else upon the quality of the workers sent to that particular firm whether any others were subsequently taken on. An unfortunate experience at first would confirm the reasons for hesitation, whereas a group of good workers would evoke the comment, 'If you have any more like that, let's have them.'

For the period of the war it was possible to say that the West Indians were kept fully employed; unemployment and discrimination were not serious problems between 1941 and 1945. As Mr. Arnold Watson put it in an address he gave to a meeting organised by the League of



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Coloured Peoples in London in March 1942, 'Temporarily, at least, we have found the prerequisite industrial conditions. Negroes and white men can now work in the same shop.'<sup>1</sup>

### 3. WAGES, ALLOWANCES AND CONDITIONS OF WORK

In considering the employment of coloured workers in industry the question of rates of pay and working conditions looms large. In the case of the West Indian Negroes in Britain the Trade Unions would have raised serious objections had there been any attempt to under-cut the standard and agreed rates. In fact no such attempt was made in any circumstances. It was one of the fundamental points of the official scheme that the men were to be employed at the standard rates payable to English workers in the same circumstances; this clause was inserted into the agreements signed by the men before they left the Colonies. The disputes which subsequently arose regarding wage rates were the result of misunderstanding on the part of the West Indians and in no case was there any departure from the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Owing to misunderstandings, wage rates were in fact a source of difficulty and dispute from the beginning and throughout the operation of the scheme. The reasons for this concern about wages are not difficult to see. The West Indians were as anxious as the Trade Unions not to be used to under-cut the standard rates. Furthermore, rates of pay are vital in determining satisfaction with working conditions. This is particularly true when consideration is given to the question of a relative rather than absolute rates of pay. This is largely because wages are closely linked with status in present-day industry. The desire to maintain and improve status governs a great deal of the behaviour of individuals and groups in industry and is a cause of much dissatisfaction and anxiety. This is particularly true when there is a fear that a superior status is being threatened, or that due recognition of status is not being given to an individual or minority group.

This principle is very clearly illustrated in the case of the West Indian workers in this country. The question of relative rates of pay between the West Indians and white workers, and between different groups within the West Indian group itself, was a source of complaint from the day the first contingent started work. There is no doubt that in

<sup>1</sup> Watson, A. R., *West Indian Workers in Great Britain*, p. 14 (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1942).



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addition to the motives of genuine patriotism which led many of the men to volunteer for service in England, there was also the powerful incentive of being able to earn wage packets of proportions unheard of in the West Indies.

Before sailing the first contingent had been required to sign a document setting out their conditions of service, at the bottom of which there was a list of the rates of pay which they could expect to earn. It was subsequently discovered that the rates quoted were those applying to one private firm in Liverpool which was paying more than the standard trade union rate at that time. The Government factories to which the men of the first contingent were sent were paying only the basic rate. This was not fully understood by the men who immediately suspected that they were being asked to work for rates which would be under-cutting the English workers; in protest they refused to start work. The situation was described by the Ministry Official in charge of the scheme in the following terms:

‘On the 19th February (1941) I was asked by the DDC (Merseyside) and the Labour Officer at one of the R.O.F.’s to go urgently to the factory as the whole party of sixteen men had refused to work. The DDC borrowed a car to take me to this nine-miles-distant R.O.F. A mile or two from our destination we met the whole Jamaican party walking away from the factory. The men were aggrieved because the wage rates at the factory did not agree with the rates given to them in Jamaica as those prevailing for “skilled workers in Great Britain” . . . I explained to the men that although these rates were lower than those given to them in Jamaica they were the “rate for the job” (as they had been promised) and that they applied equally to white men; there was, it was urged, no question of the Jamaicans being used to under-cut the rate. They asked me how it would be possible for them to live on these rates and to send money home. I then suggested that the overtime or production bonus would help, only to be countered by the men affirming that they could rely only upon the set rates in the foreseeable future. I pleaded with the men not to sink the whole experiment on the very day after their arrival in Merseyside. . . . The upshot of a strenuous hour was that, on my undertaking to represent their case in London, they, on their part, undertook, “honourably” to start work the following day. This they did.’

Hurried negotiations with London led to the establishment of a special expatriation allowance of £1 per week per man which, it was subsequently arranged, would be paid directly into an account for them in the Colony. Even this gesture caused a certain amount of bad feeling in view of the fact that the equivalent sum paid to an English worker required to work in a town away from home was £1 4s. 6d.

In subsequent months it did in fact prove possible for the men,

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particularly the more skilled ones, to earn very large wage packets. This was especially true at the height of the war when there was so much overtime work available, of which many of the men took full advantage. The general feeling was one of 'making hay while the sun shines', because the prospects of such earnings being available to them after the war in their own Colony were considered to be poor. Many technicians were reported to have earned as much as £13 or £14 per week (and a few even more) at the height of the munitions drive. Naturally, such large sums were exceptional and were reduced considerably in the later months of the war. This also was a source of complaint with some of the men who had accustomed themselves to a standard of living which was far above that which could be maintained on an ordinary weekly wage, without overtime. On the other hand many of the men took the opportunity of saving large sums and there were regular remittances to families at home; these remittances also suffered considerable reduction towards the end of the war.

### *Wage Differentials*

A very severe problem arose among a number of the trainees because of the large differentials that occurred between the earnings of different groups. The highest earnings in certain factories among the trainees amounted to £10 per week or more. Others less fortunate, who did not have opportunities to receive bonuses and to work overtime, were not earning more than between £5-£6 per week. Since the allocation of men to different firms or different parts of the same firm had been quite arbitrary these differences did not represent any necessary distinction in merit or skill; the differentials were the cause of a great deal of resentment and discontent which found its expression in a number of ways. An incident similar to the one described on the first day at the R.O.F. also occurred when a number of trainees were sent to a factory only to find that their wages were going to be considerably less than some of their companions were earning elsewhere. Men openly agitated in the factories for the jobs which carried the most opportunities for earning higher pay, and the English workers became apprehensive because they were afraid that the West Indian workers might receive preferential treatment in view of the backing which they received from the Ministry of Labour and the Colonial Office. Furthermore, such irresponsible behaviour on the part of the West Indians was not always dealt with as strictly as it should have been, since sympathetically minded employers tended to relax discipline in favour of the coloured Colonials.



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This naturally tended in the long run to make the situation worse. Sometimes men purposely slacked just in order to get dismissed and effect a transfer to another firm. These arbitrary wage differentials also had serious effects upon morale in the hostels. Men who had sailed together, done some training and lived together in the same hostel were receiving widely different wage packets. One Negro was seen standing on the table in the common-room waving his wage packet excitedly and shouting 'I'm in the big money!' Such a situation naturally aggravated the other grievances that the men had about life in the hostels and the treatment they received outside. As a result a number of the men staying in the hostels refused to pay their dues as a form of protest. Once started by a few, this practice spread and became chronic. In some cases large debts were accumulated; unfortunately the first group of offenders were not dealt with strictly enough, and by the end of June 1943 eighteen men from Jamaica owed between them £170, five men from British Honduras owed £27, and six from Barbados owed £24. Normal disciplinary methods, involving ejection of a large number of men from the hostels, were more or less precluded, because of the difficulty they would have in finding any alternative accommodation in a hurry.

The sense of discrimination under which some of the men laboured with regard to wage rates was completely unfounded. As had been pointed out, in no case was a West Indian paid less than the agreed trade union rate for the job. It is more difficult to assess the complaints with regard to other aspects of working conditions. Some West Indians claim that they tended to be picked for the more unpleasant jobs; others said that they did not get the promotion they should have had by seniority and merit. In one firm it was suggested that the Jamaicans tended to be put on a new shop to get it going, but that when the time came for them to be up-graded to chargehands or foremen, they would be moved to a new shop and other men brought in to take over these responsible posts. It has not been possible to ascertain if there was ever any truth in these allegations. Whether or not these complaints had any real foundation, they serve to indicate that the West Indians did not always feel completely identified with the factories in which they worked, and did sometimes labour under a sense of discrimination and deprivation.

Before the final winding-up of the scheme in 1946 many changes of employment took place and the men who had been placed originally in their separate contingents intermingled and spread out among a number of different firms. By October 1944 it was reported that the

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trainees who had been placed in the Manchester and Bolton area were scattered among thirteen different employers, and a total of more than fifty employers had by the end of the scheme employed one or more West Indians. Sometimes the moves took place in order to suit the individual, but more often according to the demands of the labour situation. In October 1944 fifty-five out of the seventy-seven technicians originally drafted to two of the R.O.F.s were still working there. In March 1951 the remaining R.O.F. (the others having closed) had twelve of the original West Indian contingent, who have remained with the factory ever since. In this way the West Indians who arrived in 1941, when the factory was only just beginning to expand, have some of the longest service records in the factory.

### 4. POST-WAR REDUNDANCY AND REDUCTION OF EARNINGS

The end of the war in Europe brought about a profound change in the position of the West Indian technicians and trainees in England, particularly with regard to the employment question. Even before the war finished there were signs of a growing restlessness among the men, which could be traced to the uncertainty with regard to their future. The overtime and bonus rates, which had enabled them to maintain a high standard of living and often to send large sums home for the maintenance of relatives, were already beginning to disappear by the end of 1944. Redundancies were threatened which were particularly serious for the West Indians who recognised that their prospects of employment in the face of returning ex-servicemen would be poor. In November 1944 the Welfare Officer reported that an atmosphere of unsettlement was beginning to show itself amongst technicians and trainees, which was attributed to the termination of the war and repatriation.

Many men who had become accustomed to high wages through overtime and bonuses found it difficult to adjust themselves to the new situation where they had to rely upon basic wages. Some had assumed family responsibilities which, in addition to high rents and travelling expenses, were making it hard for them to live within their means. It was difficult for men who had not known England in the pre-war days to understand that the large earnings they had received since they came to Britain were exceptional and that it was up to them to adjust their habits and standard of living according to the more normal expectations of production without overtime. Despite repeated warnings from the Welfare Officer there were some who completely failed



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to see the situation realistically, and who tended to pass the blame for their financial difficulties on to the authorities.

Redundancy grew in the early months of 1945 and the placing of West Indians, particularly those with only semi-skilled qualifications, became a serious problem. In his report for February 1945 the Welfare Officer made the following significant comment:

‘Redundancy continues in the area and difficulties are envisaged in respect of placing semi-skilled men, who, by reason of higher policy, will be offered labourer’s work. This will be most unfortunate in the case of the trainee, as the implication in the meaning of the word “labourer” in the West Indies has a far deeper and lower status and significance than in this country. It should cause no surprise if the men on the whole refuse to do labouring jobs, and I think it is important that the position be made clear. The machinery of direction in the case of failure to do the job and subsequent action will place the Department in a most unenviable position.’

April 1945 saw the end of the war in Europe, but no details had been announced at that time with regard to the post-war procedure relating to training and repatriation. The uncertainty and insecurity of their position was undoubtedly sensed by the men with consequent effects upon their morale. This is reflected in the report of the Welfare Officer for May 1945.

‘The position regarding redundant or unemployed men has not improved during the month. The cessation of hostilities seemed to suggest unsettlement amongst a number of the men who are now exploring the ground of repatriation. This number is not large, and may be increased as time goes on. There is lacking, however, a desire to return home, and enquiries are being made as to whether employment will be found for them when they return home, or their position safe-guarded as is envisaged in respect of natives of this country who have been on Active Service. The position of the Trainees and non-trade-union men is all the more difficult, and it is strongly suggested that action be taken to indicate the next step in respect of Technicians and Trainees and avoid a general dissatisfaction among the men. There is a tendency at the moment to move away from Merseyside to the south of England. This action is not encouraged, but it is difficult to intervene when scope of employment is limited here, and the men can seek and find their own jobs in their new surroundings.’

The month of July produced further evidence of the growing uneasiness:

‘The general position in connection with the scheme has further deteriorated. As evidence of the feeling of frustration which seems to be taking a great hold of the men, the new Warden at one hostel was assaulted recently.’

In November 1945 the Welfare Officer reported that the loosening of the provisions of the Essential Works and Control of Engagements

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Orders was making it hard to force employers to accept West Indians even when vacancies had been notified. The relaxation of these orders was a subject of much controversy at the time. It was strongly pressed for by the trade unions, who at the beginning of the war had only accepted 'direction of labour' on the condition that it would be removed at the earliest opportunity after the end of the war. With the impending election the government was under considerable pressure to rescind these Orders. Although it subsequently became necessary to reaffirm the Orders during the economic crisis of 1947, the period of relaxation at the end of the war had a definite effect in making the placing of coloured Colonials an even more difficult problem than it might have been. Early in 1946, a number of instances were reported where men had been turned down for vacancies on the ground of their colour. The position was somewhat complicated, in certain cases, owing to claims on the part of employers that the men were not properly qualified for the work required. Although in some cases this was true, in many instances it appears to have been a rationalisation of a determination not to employ coloured men in any case.

In June 1946 it was reported:

'There is no change in the situation on Merseyside. The Regional Officer of the Colonial Office communicated with Shipyard Labour Supply indicating discriminatory treatment by employers against coloured Colonial subjects. It was pointed out by this Department to Shipyard section that the position is not easy, as would appear on the face of it, for whereas fitters, within the terms of the Amalgamated Engineers' Union, are competent to do maintenance work, they are not necessarily marine fitters, and as experience in the past had often been disappointing, employers on shipping are reluctant to take on Colonials, even if they are members of the A.E.U. As no effort has been made by the Colonial Office to take up the matter with this Department, it is only fair or pertinent to say that the matter is pending. The opinion, however, is given that this piecemeal approach to problems concerning the employment of coloured people in industry is sheer waste of time; the trouble has its basis in the status of the Negro as a citizen and only a proper definition of his position generally publicised could clear the air.'

It is interesting to compare this position at the end of the war in Britain with that which arose in America when the Fair Employment Practices Committee was brought to an end in 1946. The evidence seems to suggest that in the United States also, Negro workers were beginning to lose ground which they had gained during the war and that discrimination was beginning to appear on a larger scale again. Since 1946 a number of State Commissions have been set up to do the work which

had been done by the F.E.P.C. during the war. There has been no similar movement in Britain and there is still no way in which a Negro can obtain redress if he has suffered unjust discrimination.

## 5. EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS IN LIVERPOOL AND THE NORTH-WEST SINCE 1946

### *Unemployment on Merseyside*

Unemployment on Merseyside in the years since the end of the war has continued at a rate considerably above the average for the country as a whole. While the extent of unemployment has been small compared with the situation during the depression of the inter-war years, it has been sufficiently high to warrant the scheduling of Merseyside as a development area in order that various industries may be attracted to the district especially to the industrial estates that have been laid out. The policy appears to have had a moderate degree of success, but it was difficult to provide for the setting up of new industries in the area at a pace fast enough to compensate for the decline in employment. This decline resulted from a decreasing demand for arms and other war-time products. When rearmament started again, employment at the end of 1951 reached the highest in the post-war period.

After the winding-up of the special Ministry of Labour scheme for West Indians the Ministry ceased to keep special records of the employment of these men. They were dealt with by the ordinary machinery, as were the numerous post-war immigrants from the Colonies.<sup>1</sup> Nor in the ordinary course of events was any special record kept of the numbers of Colonials on the unemployment register. A special count was made<sup>2</sup> of unemployed Colonials in January 1950 and in February 1951. Tables 6 and 7 show the figures for West Indians analysed by occupation. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to distinguish between those who came to Britain originally under the 'scheme' and those who came by other means. It is known, however, that some of the original technicians and trainees with which this study has been primarily concerned, are included among the figures for 1950.

In commenting upon the figures for February 1951 a Ministry Official wrote:

'I think I can say that the figures reflect a real improvement in the employment prospects of coloured Colonials. There is certainly no seasonal factor in the decline in the numbers employed. In fact the seasonal influence would

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 9.

<sup>2</sup> By request of the author.



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tend to increase the numbers unemployed at this time of the year. I think that the fall in the numbers from 401 in January 1950<sup>1</sup> to 264 in February 1951, a drop of 34 per cent, reflects the general improvement in the employment situation which has occurred on North Merseyside during the past year . . .<sup>2</sup>

So far as we have been able to ascertain none of the West Indians shown on these (1951) returns came over under the Ministry's war-time scheme.'

TABLE 6

*Statistics of West Indians on the Register of  
Liverpool (Leece Street) Employment Exchange on  
30th January 1950*

Occupation	Age Groups					Total
	18-30	31-39	40-45	46-55	56-60	
<b>SKILLED AND SEMI- SKILLED</b>						
Joiner	—	1	—	1	—	2
Coffin Maker	—	1	—	—	—	1
Pipe Fitter	—	—	1	—	—	1
Rigger	—	—	—	—	1	1
Welder	4	3	1	—	—	8
Boiler Fireman	2	1	2	—	—	5
Electrician	5	2	—	—	—	7
Fitter	1	2	—	—	—	3
Motor Mechanic	3	—	—	—	—	3
Turner	1	1	—	—	—	2
Machinist	—	—	—	1	—	1
Radio Mechanic	1	—	—	—	—	1
Assembler	1	—	—	—	—	1
(Cabinet maker)	1	—	—	—	—	1
Piano Repairer	2	—	—	—	—	2
Cook	1	2	—	1	—	4
Waiter	—	2	—	—	—	2
Motor Driver	1	1	—	—	—	2
Deck Hand	1	—	—	—	—	1
Ship's Fireman	4	9	4	5	3	25
Steward	—	1	—	—	1	2
Musician	1	—	—	—	—	1
Tailor	1	—	—	—	—	1
<b>UNSKILLED</b>						
General Labourer	18	4	—	1	—	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> These figures include 301 West Africans in 1950 and 194 West Africans in 1951.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting that the 1951 figures for unemployed West Indians show a drop of 56 per cent among skilled and semi-skilled workers, but a slight increase in the number of unskilled men unemployed.



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Elsewhere certain calculations have been made, based upon estimates of the total Colonial population in Liverpool,<sup>1</sup> of the rates of unemployment among Colonials in Merseyside. The figures must be regarded

TABLE 7

*Statistics of West Indians on the Register of  
Liverpool (Leece Street) Employment Exchange on  
10th February 1951*

<i>Skilled and semi-skilled occupations</i>	<i>Age Groups</i>					<i>Total</i>
	18-30	31-39	40-45	46-55	56-60	
Painter and Decorator (House)	—	1	—	—	—	1
Plumber	—	—	1	—	—	1
Rigger (Ship Repairing)	1	—	—	—	—	1
Welder	2	1	—	—	—	3
Carpenter (Ship)	—	—	1	—	—	1
Electrician (Wireman)	1	—	—	—	—	1
Boiler Fireman	2	1	1	1	—	5
Fireman (Ship)	1	2	—	1	1	5
Millwright	—	1	—	—	—	1
Fitter (Engineering)	—	1	—	—	—	1
Motor Mechanic	—	—	—	1	—	1
Motor Repairer (Garage)	2	—	—	—	—	2
Piano Repairer	1	—	—	—	—	1
Barman-Waiter	2	—	—	—	—	2
Cook (Hotel)	—	1	—	—	—	1
Cook (Ship)	—	2	—	1	—	3
Seaman	1	1	1	1	—	4
Motor Lorry Driver	1	—	—	—	—	1
<i>Totals</i>	14	11	4	5	1	35
<hr/>						
<i>Unskilled Occupations</i>						
Joiner's Labourer	1	—	—	—	—	1
Painter's Labourer	1	1	—	—	—	2
Plumber's Labourer	1	—	—	—	—	1
Scaler	1	1	—	—	—	2
General Labourer	18	8	2	1	—	29
<i>Totals</i>	22	10	2	1	—	35
<i>Grand Total</i>	36	21	6	6	1	70

<sup>1</sup> Richmond, A. H., 'Economic Insecurity and Stereotypes as Factors in Colour Prejudice', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XLII, Section 8, 1950.

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with a great deal of caution in the light of their estimated nature, but they do appear to indicate that unemployment amongst both West Indian and West African Colonials was approximately 17 per cent in January 1950. In 1951, the figure appears to be approximately 12 per cent. These figures compare with the figures of 5 per cent declining to between 3 per cent and 4 per cent in 1951 among the total working population of Merseyside. This average is above that for the country as a whole (approximately 1.5 per cent).

### *Discrimination in Employment*

It is not possible from these figures to prove the extent of discrimination against Negroes in Merseyside. Palmer<sup>1</sup> has pointed out the dangers of using figures of unemployment to prove discrimination unless the groups have been matched for factors such as age, qualifications, etc. Nevertheless, although it is not possible to give precise and quantitative formulation to the extent and degree of discrimination, there is undeniable evidence that it does occur. The reasons given by employers for refusing to employ coloured workers are numerous; often they are based upon unfortunate and bitter experience of irresponsible coloured employees whose bad behaviour has prejudiced the chances of other Negroes who seek work there. At other times employers pass the responsibility on to the workers by maintaining that whilst they would be quite prepared to employ coloured workers they dare not do so for fear of strikes by their present employees as a result. Whilst no instances have ever been officially notified of an industrial dispute over the employment of Negroes, there have been occasional instances of threatened strikes on these grounds and this undoubtedly provides a useful rationalisation for the prejudiced employer.

Whilst the Ministry of Labour both locally and in the North-west Region as a whole have continued to press employers to accept coloured workers, their work has often been made more difficult by the irresponsible behaviour of a minority of the Colonials concerned. One employer, for example, wrote to the Ministry complaining of the behaviour of certain of their coloured employees and added:

'In accordance with a previous request, we ask you not to submit any coloured men for various vacancies which we may inform you of from time to time. We are having a terrible lot of difficulty with them and eventually the bulk of them will be dismissed from our employ.'

<sup>1</sup> Palmer, E. H., 'Discrimination in Urban Employment', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, No. 4, January 1947.

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In another instance the employers' federation of a certain industry was asked to consider the possibility of accepting a group of coloured workers; the employers' organisation replied to the Ministry of Labour in the following terms:

'You will recollect that last week you spoke to me about the placing of Jamaicans in the [industry], and I promised to place the matter before my Council at their next meeting. This meeting took place last evening, and after a full discussion on the subject, I was instructed to let you know that we view with grave apprehension the placing of these Nationals in our industry.

'In the first place we are informed that where they have already started work in the [industry] they do not show the adaptability or dexterity which is absolutely essential if they are to succeed.

'Further it is felt by my Council that any extension of the numbers of Jamaicans working in the [industry] will ultimately result in less recruitment inasmuch as their presence would, we believe, act as a deterrent to English school-leavers; and after all these are the people we must have if we are to continue.'

In the face of difficulties of this kind local officials of the Ministry have sometimes despaired of the possibility of placing coloured workers. One local official complained to Regional Office in 1946 that vacancy staff at that Exchange had gone to considerable pains in the past to persuade employers to accept coloured workers, with considerable success. But in many cases the men behaved in such a way as to make employers unwilling to accept the Ministry's recommendations of any potential employee. The official concerned stated: 'In view of what has happened in the past I am extremely loath to prejudice our good relationships with employers by trying to "sell" any more men to local employers.' It is noteworthy that the Regional Office in replying to this letter pointed out that the behaviour of coloured workers is often itself a product of the prejudice which they feel is being expressed towards them, and continued:

'It is, of course, important that however true our generalisations may be about the character, personalities and qualities of the coloured men, each separate case should be dealt with as far as possible on its merits, and we should not assume because a man is coloured or belongs to a particular race that he therefore shares the shortcomings of that race with all his compatriots. There have been, as you know, during the war, some outstanding examples of successful placings of coloured workers throughout the Region.'

Many of the more responsible and well adjusted Colonial workers are aware of the way in which the slightest error or misconduct on their part will prejudice not only their own prospects in the firm in which



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they work, but also those of other coloured workers who seek employment there. As one West Indian put it:

‘My principle is always to think “what are the consequences of this going to be for other coloured people, not just me personally?” I feel I have a big responsibility to do my job well and to behave properly, because other people do not just judge *me* by what I do, but all the coloured people as well. The trouble is that a few bad types give the rest of the coloured people in this country a bad name. I feel that it is up to me to keep up the good name of coloured people in my firm. At the present time my firm would employ any coloured man who knew his job . . .’

Even firms that have a high opinion of the quality of coloured workers and employed them successfully during the war, are sometimes reluctant to re-employ them today. This is particularly true of large firms that had big redundancies at the end of the war. If they are beginning to take on labour again they often feel under an obligation to take on men or women who previously worked in the firm and who are local Liverpool people. When only limited employment is available they feel it would be unfair to offer it to workers who, in the eyes of other employees at any rate, are strangers and ‘foreigners’. It is pointed out by the labour departments of firms in this position that they would have to adopt the same policy towards Irish or even English workers from other parts of the country. The policy does not, therefore, it is claimed, represent colour prejudice or discrimination. It is not unnatural that coloured workers themselves find it difficult to see it from this point of view.

The difficulties of finding any employment in the Merseyside area has resulted in a considerable number of the technicians and trainees leaving Liverpool for other towns, particularly in the Midlands and the South-east, in search of work, which is more plentiful in those parts. The factor which always acts as a deterrent to this policy is the problem of finding lodgings or some kind of accommodation in the new area. There appears to be something of a snowball effect occurring; once one or two Colonials have established themselves in a town they seek ways and means of finding work and accommodation for their compatriots.

In all it must be recorded that although there is undeniable evidence that discrimination against coloured persons in employment does occur, the actual extent of such discrimination is sometimes exaggerated; in any case it is often the result of unfortunate experience with unsatisfactory coloured workers.



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### 6. A NOTE ON MANCHESTER, BOLTON AND OTHER TOWNS

Although the present study is concerned primarily with West Indian Negroes in Liverpool, brief mention must be made of the situation in the neighbouring towns of Bolton and Manchester, where both during and since the war a number of West Indians have been working.

*Manchester.* During the war a number of the West Indian trainees were sent to Government Training Centres and subsequently to factories in the Manchester area. In particular the men from British Honduras and Barbados were placed in the motor industry and housed in the hostel, 'West Indies House', Manchester. Towards the end of the war a large proportion of the men found private lodgings, following a fire at the hostel.

Unemployment in Manchester after the war did not assume as serious proportions as on Merseyside and the majority of the West Indian technicians and trainees appear to have remained in employment. In March 1949 it was reported that there were 150 coloured Colonials registered as unemployed at the Oldham Street Exchange, but that of this number only twenty-six were West Indian: of these twenty-six only seven appear to have come to Britain under the original scheme, the other were discharged ex-servicemen or men who paid their passages and arrived during 1948. The figures for February 1951 are given in Table 8 and appear to show a small rise to thirty-one.

Certain difficulties with regard to the procedure at the Employment Exchange for registration appear to have occurred towards the end of 1946. It is alleged that a number of the Colonials were in the habit of arriving out of their turn and endeavouring to jump the queue. The result of this was a number of disturbances between coloured and white persons in the Exchange. In order to prevent further trouble and violence it was arranged that all Colonials should be required to register between the hours of two and three in the afternoon at a particular box. This led to the complaint that segregation and discrimination were being practised against the unemployed Colonials. The matter was taken up by the secretary of the Manchester and Salford Trades Council in 1949 and given publicity by the local press. On investigation the secretary expressed himself satisfied that the special signing-on arrangements were necessary for the preservation of order and that no discrimination was being exercised against coloured workers. At the same time it must be noted that of the 150 unemployed Colonials in March 1949 (the majority West African seamen or labourers) twenty-seven had been

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unemployed for more than three months but less than six, twenty-one for between six and twelve months, and ten for a year or more. The Employment Exchange confirmed the reluctance of employers to accept coloured workers owing to the difficult behaviour of some of them.

*Bolton.* During the war a large number of the West Indian trainees were housed at the Colonial House, Bolton, and worked in neighbouring aircraft industries. The behaviour of many of the men in the hostel left much to be desired although it was probably no worse than in other

TABLE 8  
*West Indians in Manchester*  
*Analysis of Unemployed on 26th February 1951*

Occupation	Age Groups						Total
	18-30	31-39	40-45	46-55	56-60	Over 60	
<b>SKILLED AND SEMI-SKILLED</b>							
Painter	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Welder	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Machine Operator	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Ship's Fireman	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
<b>UNSKILLED</b>							
Pipe Fitter's Mate	1	—	—	—	—	1	2
General Labourer	14	7	1	2	—	—	24
Boiler Scaler	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
<i>Totals</i>	18	7	2	3	—	1	31

hostels. Great difficulty was experienced in obtaining staff who were prepared to face the problems of dealing with this group of men. Occasional acts of violence against the staff were not unknown and some of the West Indians earned an unfortunate reputation in the area. This resulted in a ban against coloured men in dance halls in the district, which was not relaxed until 1948.

With the closing of the colonial hostels in Bolton at the end of the war the majority of the original residents were scattered to other areas including Liverpool and Manchester. A new group of West Indians

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began to grow up in the area, living in private lodgings. This group appears to have been relatively well adjusted, largely as a result of the unofficial 'welfare officer' activities of one ex-R.A.F. West Indian. They were employed in various occupations in the cotton industry, as motor mechanics, motor drivers and labourers. There have been no disturbances since the end of the war and the Chief Constable has expressed the view that the men are well behaved and have caused no trouble in the town. There appears nevertheless to be some reluctance on the part of employers to consider the employment of West Indians or other coloured workers on any larger scale. Local trade union officials also seem to regard the employment of larger numbers of Colonials with doubt.

*Birmingham and other towns.* The poor employment prospects had led to a substantial migration of West Indian and other Colonials to the Midlands in search of employment. A small community of coloured people is now growing up in Birmingham, amounting to a few hundreds.<sup>1</sup> Housing appears to be a serious problem here as elsewhere. The local authority has taken an interest in the welfare of the men, and has set up an evening institute known as the Afro-Caribbean Centre, at which educational and recreational facilities are available. Colonials are also being increasingly employed in the pottery districts, and a few have found their way into the mining industry. In these areas of full employment and labour scarcity there appear to be few problems as far as employment is concerned. Accommodation remains one of the most serious difficulties, which acts as a strong deterrent to other men, especially those with families, who would otherwise like to leave Merseyside.

<sup>1</sup> Written 1951. It has since grown considerably.



## CHAPTER V

### RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

#### 1. RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYERS AND MANAGERMENTS

**T**HE relations between the West Indian technicians and trainees and the managements of the firms employing them appear to have varied a very great deal from factory to factory; the nature of the relationships established depended largely upon the personal qualities of the individuals sent to that particular firm, but it also depended upon the initial attitudes and policy of the managements concerned. Where there had been hesitation about taking coloured workers there was sometimes underlying suspicion and hostility or a tendency to be over critical and intolerant of the inevitable difficulties occurring in the early period of adjustment and habituation.

In other cases the reverse attitude and policy was adopted by the management, which often had equally unsatisfactory results. Sometimes, the management adopted an excessively tolerant attitude and tended to deal too leniently with offenders: then naturally some West Indians took advantage of the situation. Furthermore, any appearance of indulgence or relaxation of discipline on the part of the managements towards the Colonials in an attempt to show sympathy for their particular difficulties tended to arouse the resentment of white workers. In some cases the latter already felt that the West Indians were in a favoured position because of their special backing from the Ministry of Labour and the Colonial Office.

Despite these difficulties many employers did succeed in integrating the coloured workers into the normal working of the firm. After short periods of initial adjustment the men settled down to work to the entire satisfaction of most of the firms concerned. In some cases West Indians were promoted to the position of chargehand. Occasionally, such good relationships were disturbed by a change in the personnel of the management, where the newcomer was not familiar with the West Indian



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workers. It was often found that the least satisfactory type of person to set in a position of authority over the West Indian group was anyone who had experience of dealing with 'coloured labour' in the Colonies; such people tended to deal with the West Indians in Britain by methods similar to those that they had used overseas and to assume that the behaviour and conduct of West Indians was comparable with that of unsophisticated labourers fresh from the 'bush'.

The following report made by the Welfare Officer in June 1943 summarises the position in the firms employing the largest numbers of West Indians:

### *Government Factory 1*

For many months the position in this Factory was very difficult. The technicians appeared to meet much prejudice on the floor and the management did not seem anxious to tackle this very thorny problem. A few visits by officials from Regional Office and Headquarters and from the Colonial Office sufficed to create that interest necessary to fix and deal with the problem as a major one in the Colonial field. There were technicians who could not appreciate the full implications of the experiment and who, directly or indirectly, worked against the best interests of all concerned. These were gradually weeded out and the position at this Factory is now very encouraging.

### *Government Factory 2*

The problems that affected the first R.O.F. did not show themselves in this factory, and for a long time the position was very satisfactory. Two charge-hands were made early and their position was maintained with skill and efficiency. They still occupy that position of trust. The advent of a new Superintendent, without that special knowledge of background, seemed to bring several pin-pricks to the surface and during the last six or eight months there has been a steady deterioration of the position. Several meetings had to be arranged and the position is now much easier.

### *Private Firms 1 and 2*

These firms in the early period had some reluctance in employing coloured British subjects. In fact, no technician was employed there, but this was taken up by this department with the managements and, in the case of the first firm, strongly supported by the Manager of the New Ferry Exchange; eventually our men found an opening and have since been employed. There is much praise for the skill of many at the second, but I am afraid that the same does not apply to the men at the first. Apart from the technicians submitted directly by this department through the Employment Exchange, a few Jamaicans (both scheme and non-scheme) have sought and obtained employment there. This, in the circumstances, was very regrettable. In any case, an effort is being made to clear up what is not now a very satisfactory position.

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### *Private Firm 3*

This firm has been one of the most sympathetic with our scheme for besides the trainees, several skilled technicians are employed there, doing good work and giving satisfaction.

### *Government Factory 3 and Private Firm 4*

The difficulties at these two factories have been small—perhaps because of the small number of technicians employed. A few men have been, and are still employed there, covering the whole period and prior to my assumption of the post of Welfare Officer.

### *Private Firm 5*

This firm, too, has taken the sympathetic line and although the numbers have dwindled materially the men remaining are very happy at these works.

### *Shipyard Employment*

An appreciably large number of technicians is employed under that heading. The men comprise boilermakers, welders, riveters, fitters and electricians. They are nearly all members of their appropriate Trade Union and give satisfaction at their work. Some firms have been a little difficult in employing coloured workers, but with the firm stand taken by the Assistant Regional Controller and the Man-power Board, these difficulties are gradually dwindling. The attitude of a very small number of technicians has not been at all helpful.

### *Other Firms*

There are several other small firms where our men work. The men employed are too few to create knotty problems, but without the sympathy of the employers and special effort by the technicians, the position could not have been so satisfactory.

Many of the men were particularly sensitive about being given work which they considered to be unpleasant or below their dignity; they were apt immediately to interpret such action as an example of prejudice and discrimination against them. Outdoor work, for example, was much disliked. An illustration of the way in which such a situation is seen in very different light by the West Indian worker and the labour manager is given by the following incident. Two of the Jamaican technicians who had been employed at one of the large factories in Liverpool since their arrival in this country were allocated to work on the repair of the factory street-lighting system; according to the labour manager these two men were the only ones available to do the work at the time. The men on their part maintained that they did not consider the work appropriate to their skill and considered that it should be allocated more fairly so that a larger number of men were covered; in this case they would be required to undertake this particular work at less frequent

## RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

intervals. The following is a statement made by one of the Jamaicans at the time:

'I am one of the West Indies Volunteers. Ever since I arrived in England I have been employed at the ——— Factory, Liverpool. Approximately two and a half years in the Electrical Dept. A co-worker and I, also a Volunteer, were one of the first men to be employed in that Dept. Now instead of being given a square deal we are treated as of no account. After two and a half years we are given the worst kind of jobs. I have spoken to the foreman about same and he says we cannot be trusted with any other kind of work. I told him since he has taken so long to find that out why not report the matter to the factory engineer and let him look into the matter and he has refused. The reason for all this there is hardly any work for the men employed. Work that should be given to the factory employees are given to Contractors so the men are left to lounge around and when a job does come in the white men are given the cream. I am sorry I have to mention colour but that is the only conclusion I can arrive at. The management seems to have forgotten when they depend on us. My co-worker and I have applied on several occasions for our release and we have been refused on the grounds that they cannot get men from the Labour Exchange. The little work that the Contractors do not get and is brought in to the shop, if it was equally divided I would have no complaint. In this factory they all appear to have forgotten that the war is not over. I did not come here to be messed around but to put my shoulder to the wheel and get everything over as early as possible that we can all get back to a normal life. Unless we all fight shoulder to shoulder regardless of colour or creed that will never happen.'

In view of the fact that one of the two men had on two previous occasions 'refused to obey reasonable orders', the labour manager sought the discharge of the two men. He felt that strong action was necessary to avoid a feeling of futility and discontent among those responsible for controlling and directing the work of the electrical sections.

Although there was always a tendency for the West Indian to interpret disciplinary action or dismissal as a product of some particular grudge against him because of his skin colour, it was also possible for some of the men to identify themselves closely with local English workers against the management if they felt some injustice was being caused. The following incident was recorded by one of the Jamaican technicians who had been placed in a small firm of commercial body builders. Along with five English workers he received his dismissal and commented as follows:

'I think I have been very unfairly treated and not only myself but five other fellows, all experienced men have been given notice this week.'

'Recently four new men were brought from Manchester and placed in our



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department although there has been no increase of work. The foreman is a Manchester man, and presumably he brought them there! These men I believe draw 24/6 weekly subsistence allowance and are no more experienced than those they are replacing, the majority of who are local men. It seems to me a burning shame that we should be replaced by men who are costing the Government more and I think it should be brought to the attention of the authorities.

‘Personally I have had no argument whatsoever with the foreman or any other workman there. I have been doing my work to the best of my ability, as the contract calls for, have been keeping good time and working under circumstances which to say the least are trying. I have had to buy all my own tools and those supplied by the firm are frequently out of order. There is a constant shortage of materials, and jobs cannot be judged by the time put in on them as we have to do a lot of conversion work, such as fitting parts with substitutes and making parts of one model fit another. They never seem to have the right part for replacement. There is also an iniquitous system of “robbing” one vehicle to replace a part on another, naturally this makes a job appear as if it had taken twice as long as it should. The stock is most abominably untidily kept, and you have to be hunting for everything; part of it is kept in the foreman’s office, for which he keeps the key, and I often have to go chasing over the shop looking for him, where he gets sometimes is a mystery to me. My candid opinion is that a great deal of work is held up through sheer incompetence and slovenliness. I have never encountered such conditions not even in a small garage in the Republic of Haiti.’

Any appearance of discrimination by the management against an individual West Indian was apt to bring about marked in-group solidarity on the part of the West Indians as the following incidents illustrate:

‘We always stuck together if there were any difficulties. On one occasion a man had received a telling off without being given the opportunity of stating his own case; he had asked for an interview with the shop manager but he had been refused. The word went down the line to be outside the manager’s office at 10 o’clock. At a few minutes to ten all eyes were on the clock and the others in the factory knew the West Indians were up to something. We all went to the manager’s office together and in those days there was a crowd of us. The manager came out to know what was wrong. One of the boys said, “You refused to give so-and-so an interview . . .” The manager said at once, “Yes, but I’ll see him now; you just go back to your jobs.” We all went back to work and not a word more was said. But it did the trick.’

Another man reported:

‘One day one of our boys had got into trouble and we were anxious to know how he had got on—we were afraid they were going to give him the sack. So during lunch time we all went down to the Labour Exchange to find out. We had every intention of returning to work as soon as it was time. But when the

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Manager saw us all in a bunch he thought it was a walk out or something; he put us all in a room and told us to wait. I am told he went off to get the Ministry Welfare Officer down to handle things. We sat there like mugs for about an hour and a half. By now every one in the factory thought we had staged a mass walk out. Eventually we were told that we were to be suspended for three days for leaving our work. I could not understand what it was all about so I sent a telegram to the Ministry saying we had all been locked out. I got into a lot of trouble for sending that telegram!

It is interesting to note that in connection with the last incident the white employees threatened to strike if the coloured men were not suspended or punished in some way for their 'walk out'.

Since the war the men who have succeeded in retaining the jobs they held during the war have very often become regular and established workers in those firms. This is true, for example, of the last remaining Government factory in the neighbourhood, where nine out of the twelve<sup>1</sup> West Indian workers there are established civil servants with all the status and security that that implies. One man commented:

'Establishment give a man a feeling of security and you get certain benefits and gratuities. You know that you will be the last to be sacked. On the other hand it is a bit of a tie, because you cannot leave without sacrificing these benefits you have accumulated—and you have to be prepared to go anywhere or do any job the Ministry likes to send you on.'

This particular firm appears to have maintained satisfactory relationships between the management and the West Indians for most of the time:

'As far as the management are concerned they have always given us a square deal. In fact sometimes they have gone out of their way to be fair and decent about things. There was only one period when we had a superintendent who was a bit difficult, but since then everything has been fine. We get on very well with everyone on the management.'

It is not possible to make any broad generalisation regarding the relation between employers and their West Indian employees except that they appear to have been best where the number of West Indians was not large (between ten and twenty seems to have been the most successful), where the skill of the men allocated to the factory was at least comparable with that of the average English worker, and where there was no minority of badly adjusted West Indians to spoil the reputation of their fellows. In some factories the coloured workers were compared favourably with the members of other minority groups

<sup>1</sup> Written 1951.

## RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

employed. One labour manager said, 'I would rather employ a coloured West Indian any day to an Irishman: they are much cleaner and more reliable altogether.'

### 2. RELATIONS WITH WORKERS

In discussing the relations established between the West Indians and their fellow workers, junior supervisory staff such as chargehands and foremen are included. It should be pointed out at once that conditions varied from place to place depending a great deal upon the local situation at the time and the personnel concerned, both for the West Indians and the other workers. Nevertheless, three main stages can be detected in the relations between the two groups in almost all the places in which they were employed. There was a stage of initial surprise and shock to find a group of coloured men doing skilled work; there was a stage when the West Indian group tended to be treated as an out-group and something of a scapegoat for the problems and difficulties experienced in the factory; and there was a stage in which the West Indians became accepted as part of the natural order of things, and whilst not always completely incorporated into the life of the factory, they were at any rate tolerated and respected individually according to their merits. A further change took place at the end of the war as a result of increasing redundancy, when the West Indian tended once more to be rejected. The first stage of initial surprise and shock can only be understood in the light of the stereotyped ideas about Negroes widely held by people in Britain. Such stereotypes have pictured the Negro as a person of somewhat primitive habits, little knowledge of European ways of life, possessing no industrial skill or knowledge, and completely uncivilised in the modern western sense of the word. Such ideas reflect the widespread ignorance about conditions and ways of life in the colonies, which West Indians rightly consider exists and very much resent. They are frequently asked where they learned to speak such good English; one at least said that he was asked, in all seriousness, where he kept his tail! Others were asked if they used to wear clothes at home, and did the girls in Jamaica wear grass skirts? Astonishment reached its limit when the men set to work on the machines; one of them describes his first day in the factory as follows:

'I remember the first day I started at the factory. I was put on a machine I was quite familiar with because we had used it a lot at home. I began work straight away, but before long I had a crowd of spectators around me all of them wide-eyed! One chap asked, "Where did you learn to do that?" I told



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him I had learned it all in a factory in Kingston. Everyone was very surprised that we knew anything about machines at all. I suppose they thought we did our boring with wood and fire!

The novelty of having West Indians in the factory naturally diminished fairly quickly, and in some cases they were quickly absorbed into the ordinary run of factory life without difficulty. In other cases they came in for a lot of criticism for the quality of their work; sometimes it was felt that they were doing work which rightly should have been done by other English workers. In some firms the arrival of the West Indians coincided with the calling up of other workers for service in the forces and this caused resentment. It had been suggested that the problem of settling in the West Indians was closely linked with the whole problem of dilutee labour during the war. In some cases bad feeling was caused where West Indians went straight into highly skilled work at the equivalent rates of pay, when it was felt by some that the posts should have been filled by the process of up-grading semi-skilled workers who had been in the factory some time. It is very probable that the problems of adjustment facing the West Indians, and the attitudes towards them expressed by established skilled tradesmen, were shared by white dilutee workers who were admitted to skilled and semi-skilled work although they had not served an apprenticeship. In some cases it seems likely that the West Indians tended to interpret as colour prejudice the reactions of established workers to their arrival, when in fact it was the normal reaction of skilled workers who were jealous of their status, and quick to suspect any threat to it.

Very often difficulties arose because of the individual prejudices of a small group of people or of one or two supervisors who were in a position to make things very difficult for the West Indians. This was not made any easier by the tendency on the part of the West Indians to react aggressively to the slightest sign of what was felt to be prejudice because of their colour. There is no doubt that many of the men, if they were not so already, became extremely colour conscious and tended to interpret any situation as one of deprivation because of their race. In some cases this belief was not altogether unfounded and the sensitiveness of the men was aggravated by the unfortunate experiences which many of them had outside the factory, and which will be discussed later.

The following incident related by one of the men in his own words occurred, towards the end of the war, in a firm employing men on dock-yard work. It illustrates the way in which any experience tends to be interpreted by both English and West Indian persons in a racial frame

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of reference. The sense of injustice created by the action of the charge-hand leads to aggressive reactions from the West Indian, which in their turn give reality to the complaint against him.

'On the morning of May 1st I had been out to work and was sitting in the Welders' hut awaiting my turn on arc. They are two welders to an arc and my mate took the first part of the morning, leaving me to await my turn.

'Around 10.30 a.m. my mate came off the ship to the hut where I been sitting, thence he proceeded along the quay wall where they were a few other men sitting in the sun. When he came to the hut where I had been sitting, I enquired from him if there was anything further to be done at the moment, and then he told me there wasn't and proceeded along the quay. A few minutes after I got up and saw the chargehand there, who then asked me for the driller. I told him I had not seen any one; I moved back to go and sit in the hut again but a second thought struck me to watch the chargehand, and so I did.

'I noticed he went across to where the men was sitting and called my mate aside not taking any note of me standing by the hut door. Immediately I realised there was a job to be done and that he had lied to me when he asked for the drillers.

'My mate came across to me when the chargehand left him to go aboard the ship but before he said anything to me I said to him:

' "The chargehand came to you about a job. He came and asked me for a driller knowing he wanted you. Whose turn is it on the arc?"

'My mate said, "It's yours."

'I then said, "I am going to see the chargehand, as there was no necessity telling lies, and I am not going to stand being kicked about and used conveniently, as I noticed it's only when you are off work or if he can't find you then I get a job. If he does not want me to work well it's best they gives me my cards."

'I moved off from my mate and just as I got on board I saw the chargehand. I called to him.

'He said, "What's up now? Sick?"

'I said, "You wanted my mate to work. You had a job to be done, you came and asked me for a driller. There was no necessity for lieing to me by asking for a driller when you wanted my mate. It's my turn on the arc, you could have told me about the job but no having to lie on your self. If you people don't want to have me to work for you then let me know."

'The chargehand turned to me and said he was not telling lies.

'I said, "Yes you are."

'He said, "I wanted the driller, and I had looked in the other hut also."

'Immediately I said, "I can't understand you people; two years ago you were all different but today on the Eve of Victory you all start kick one around, but I won't stand to it. I have tolerated sufficiently already and am not going to put up with any more. The best thing for me to do is to leave here."

'The chargehand then turned to me and said, "You can f—— off the ship if you don't want to work for me."

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'I said, "Yes that much can be done but who the F——g Hell are you?"

'He said, "Who are you? You F——ers come here and earning the same money as an English men, and you don't like the English men."

'I said, "Now you have said the right thing; let me tell you this, what I am earning is mainly part of what as been taken from us in Africa, where the people have been plundered and their belonging taken here to build your Empire." I said, "You are no good, your own men won't even work for you, then why should I. There are good and bad in my race as well as the English. But you are one of the worst English men I have ever come across. You are no good and it's no wonder majority of the men won't work for you. You like to tell people to f—— off but to make it easy you had better go and see the foreman, that I am not working for you; get who you want to do your work."

'I came off the ship and been in the hut sitting again, until 11.45 when I left for lunch.

'At around 1.30 the foreman came down to the ship. All the men were in the huts and he came to the door called me and two other welders. My mate was placed with another fellow and then the foreman turn me with his hands in his pocket taking out his note-paper. He said:

' "What's the trouble down here?"

'I said, "The chargehand has already told I am not going to work for him. He tells me to f—— off the job because he lied to me. He has been up there but am sure he has not told you the right thing."

'At the same time the foreman said, "Go to the shop and wait for me." And then handed me the note telling the Head time keeper to pay me off up to 12 o'clock for misconduct. I took the note, been across to my mate and showed him. He asked me if I am going to take that and left the foreman get away with it. I said "No," then went back to the foreman and handed it to him and told him it's best for him to take it up his self. I tried to explain my case to him but he ignored me, and ran me away saying:

' "Get to hell away, I am fed up of it now, you'll have to leave here."

'The chargehand came along and then I told him I hope he's satisfied he was able to get me out of the firm on misconduct. He said, "No," he didn't do anything.

'I said, "You are the man who been to the foreman but you haven't told him the truth, I will take my cards but not that way as you had better go to him about it."

'He said he was finished and walk away into the chargehands' hut where I followed him.

'When we got inside he said, "Dick, I am sorry for you and your other mate."

'I said, "Why? and even if you did, you haven't shown it or else you wouldn't try and see that I am put out of work."

'He said he did not put me out of work and he is sorry for my boys. I then said "Why?"

'He said "You know these men don't like you boys working with them, on account of your colour, and that's why I would have done anything for you because I am sorry for you, but I am finished now."



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'Well I left and been to the shop where I saw the shop steward. I told him what had happen and said he would see the foreman. Before I left for home he said he had seen the foreman and he told him "misconduct to the chargehand", and he, the shop steward, asked about the chargehand's misconduct to workmen. The foreman said he didn't know of that. Then I made another vain effort to get the cards without the words misconduct, and showed the foreman where it's against me getting a job. He said that English law would not stop me through that.'

Often difficulties that arise were due directly to the bad behaviour of a minority of the West Indians themselves, which was as much regretted by the majority of coloured as by the white people. A few of the men had a reputation for misconduct and even violence; as so frequently happens in such circumstances this tended to give the remainder of the West Indians a bad name. The following incident is one example of the way in which the misconduct of one West Indian, when an attempt was made by a white worker to draw his attention to it, led to a fight. Apparently one of the West Indians had developed the habit of clocking off out of his turn. Another man told him to take his turn in the queue and was struck by the West Indian. The Englishman described the incident as follows, and his account is confirmed by an eye-witness:

'I was standing in a queue at 7.30 p.m. when I saw a coloured man standing about ten yards away from the clock. I then saw him, as was his usual practice, go up to the card rack, and take his card out. He was going to clock off out of his turn. I spoke to him and said that he should take his place in the queue. He then adopted a fighting attitude and eventually took a rush at me, and struck me on the right eye. I then defended myself by grabbing his wrist. I heard someone shout that he had got a knife, so I threw him down. He got up and rushed at me again, and I had to further defend myself by gripping him and throwing him. The police then arrived and intervened.

'The coloured man then said to me, "As sure as Jesus Christ is up above, I'll get you for this." I said, "Well, come on then," and he said, "No, I will not do it now. It may be a month, but I get you, don't worry. I'll hang for you."'

As time went on and the existence of the West Indian group became a familiar part of the factory arrangement, the men began to be judged more on their individual merits and less as a group. Similarly the attitudes of white people tended to vary from person to person and this was recognised by the West Indians:

'As far as the people on the floor were concerned it depended a lot on the individual. There are one or two who have a permanent grudge, but the majority are alright. Sometimes you heard people say, "Why should these damn niggers be earning more than me", or "why should they be kept on when I or my brother has to go". But this does not happen often nowadays.

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Redundancy is according to seniority and some of us arrived with the factory itself! At first people were surprised to find that we were skilled men and even more surprised when they realised that we had done proper apprenticeships and had our credentials: there were a lot of questions asked about this when the question of 'establishment' came up: but we were able to get our papers from home and prove our qualifications. At the end of the war, too, some people kept asking us when we were going home. We told them we should like to, but there just was no work and now they seem to understand and accept us alright."

In some firms where there are only one or two West Indians working today they may be among the most skilled in the factory, and as a result receive a good deal of praise from the management and often earn more than the white workers. This naturally causes a certain amount of bad feeling at times:

'I am the only West Indian in my firm, and although I say it myself I am one of the most skilled men there. The result is that the foreman tends to favour me at times and this is a bit embarrassing. I get on fine with everyone, but I know the inspectors watch my work closer than anybody's just in order to be able to show me up if I do make a mistake. I have had several rises since I came here. Last time all the others got a ten shilling rise and I got a pound. I just said "thanks" to the foreman and nothing about it to the others. But I knew it would leak out in the end. One day in the canteen one of the chaps hailed me and said, "Hallo, looking for another rise?" Then I knew it had come out. But they only joked about it and were quite friendly. I have heard the foreman telling a chap who grumbled because he did not get a rise, "When you work as well as A. then you can have a rise."'

Another man reported:

'I don't believe in making a fuss about things. I like to do my job well and I know then that I am upholding the good name of coloured people. I try to be fair and reason with people if I think they are behaving in a prejudiced way or anything. But there was one incident the other day which did really make me lose my temper. I had noticed for a long time that the man in the tool shop was always slow in serving me; but I had taken no notice. But the other day I had been waiting a long time for the storeman to come back, and when he did he ignored me and went to serve another man first. I told him how long I had been waiting and he said I must wait until the other man had been served. I got really mad and knocked the tool out of his hand. The storeman swore but he gave me what I wanted and since then he has been falling over himself to serve me properly.'

The attitudes of some of the workers towards the West Indians appear to have been distinctly ambivalent. There seems to have been genuine admiration for the skill, workmanship and other abilities shown by some of the West Indians and yet a certain reluctance to give full



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credit. The English man found it difficult to throw off altogether his previous notion of the coloured man as inferior. An illustration of this is provided by one of the Jamaican technicians who became a shop steward and subsequently deputy convenor for the trade unions in one factory. In this capacity he was often called upon to act on behalf of white employees in any dispute or difficulty with the management. On one such occasion, when the arguments put forward by the Jamaican had succeeded in reversing a decision by the management with regard to one of the white employees, the latter was heard afterwards to remark: 'Well that damn nigger certainly spoke up well for me!'

A similar instance arose when one of the West Indians was playing cricket for the factory team. He arrived a little late and while changing noticed that someone had left his watch in the dressing-room, on the table. He took it outside and asked whose it was. After its owner had claimed it, he was heard to say, 'I didn't know that a damn nigger could be so honest!'

### 3. RELATIONS WITH TRADE UNIONS

The trade union organisations, which are an integral part of the industrial structure of Britain have not been nearly so well developed in the West Indian Colonies. This was particularly true in the period before the second world war, and was specially remarked upon by all those concerned with investigating labour conditions in the West Indies at that time, including the Royal Commission of 1939,<sup>1</sup> and Major G. St. J. Orde-Browne's report of 1939.<sup>2</sup> The result of this was that the majority of the West Indians coming to England were slow in appreciating the importance of trade union membership, and its value to them. This tendency was aggravated by the fact that at least one union was slow in its recognition of the West Indians as competent and qualified for full membership. One man was ordered off the work he was doing in the shipyard because the shop steward had orders from the union delegate that no outsider was to be employed in the ships on Merseyside. After negotiation by the Welfare Officer with this union it was possible for a number of the West Indians to obtain full membership so long as they were able to produce their credentials from their employers in Jamaica. Nevertheless, this situation left a somewhat

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the West India Royal Commission, 1939*, Cmd. 6607, H.M.S.O., London, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Orde-Browne, Major G. St. J., *Labour Conditions in the West Indies*, Cmd. 6070, H.M.S.O., London, 1939.



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unfortunate impression with some of the men which was difficult to eradicate.

The situation in the other two unions primarily concerned in this question, the Amalgamated Engineering Union and the Electrical Trades Union, was a good deal more satisfactory. In fact the Ministry of Labour Officials received every co-operation from the District Secretaries of these two unions and the West Indians themselves speak highly of the way in which the unions used their influence to overcome any sign of colour prejudice among their members. As one man put it, 'In the Union I am a Brother and there is no distinction of colour, class or creed.' Another West Indian testified to the value of the trade unions in the following terms:

'One of the chief advices given to the West Indian Volunteer Technicians before they sailed from their native shores, and also when they arrived in this country was "Join one of the Unions". As a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, I can say this was good advice.

'I started work in a northern factory, which was only a few months old then, and the majority of the workers knew nothing about Unionism; fortunately a few old but conscientious Unionists started the spirit of Unionism in the factory and soon all the workers were members of a branch.

'I was still wondering what good would the Union be to me or my West Indian companions; this thought grew in me because of the attitude of my fellow workers. I was the spokesman of the West Indians at that factory, and one of the shop stewards had a talk with me which led me to join; now I'm not sorry because I have found that the Organisation of Amalgamated Engineers is a democratic body which does not distinguish between men and men on account of colour, race, creed or money.

'Two months after my membership I was elected checkbook-keeper of the branch and later money steward, a position which I still occupy. I started a campaign among my own men and a few joined but I had very great difficulty in convincing them of the good it would be to them.

'I was appointed a shop steward with the approval of my fellow countrymen and as such I find it a very hard and sometimes thankless job to please my fellow men and to do the right thing. But I keep on trying. It was not until recently that my West Indian workmates who had not joined the Union, saw what help can be obtained by being a member. There was some trouble between coloured and white workers, and the District Executives were called in who denounced the attitude of their white members; since then my fellow men have been joining up and now very nearly all West Indians are members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union."

A number of other West Indians became active union members and several held offices for varying periods, which frequently involved acting on behalf of both coloured and white workers in the factory. Neverthe-

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less the majority of the West Indians tended to be apathetic about their membership and, even more than the average English worker, tended to get in arrears with subscriptions. The distribution of union membership among technicians and trainees respectively according to occupation is shown in Tables 9 and 10. The information has been compiled from the Ministry of Labour records and applies to a period in 1944. There has been a tendency since that date to tighten up on union membership and

TABLE 9

### *Trade Union Membership by Occupation*

#### TECHNICIANS

<i>Trade Union</i>	<i>Engineering</i>		<i>Electrical Trades</i>		<i>Building and Civil Engineering</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>Skilled</i>	<i>Semi-skilled</i>	<i>Skilled</i>	<i>Semi-skilled</i>		
A.E.U.	63	39	1	—	—	103
U.B.I.S.S.S.	21	—	—	—	—	21
E.T.U.	—	—	19	—	—	19
N.S.P.	—	—	—	—	1	1
N.U.S.M.W.B.	1	—	—	—	—	1
A.S.W.	—	—	—	—	2	2
N.U.P.G.D.E.	—	—	—	—	1	1
None	—	29	—	2	1	32
<i>Total</i>	85	68	20	2	5	180*

\* Eight cases unclassified.

<i>Key</i>	
A.E.U.	Amalgamated Engineering Union
U.B.I.S.S.S.	United Society of Boiler Makers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders
E.T.U.	Electrical Trades Union
N.S.P.	National Society of Painters
N.U.S.M.W.B.	National Union of Sheet Metal Workers and Braziers
A.S.W.	Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers
N.U.P.G.D.E.	National Union of Plumbers and Glaziers and Domestic Engineers

a number of factories, which during the war were not so strict, now operate virtually 100 per cent unionism. It will be noticed from the tables that, as might be expected, membership is 100 per cent among skilled workers but much less among semi-skilled workers. The tables do not take into account whether the members were fully paid up or not. It is interesting to note also that among the trainees those in the last three contingents appear to have a greater proportion of members than earlier

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contingents (59 per cent against 26 per cent:  $P < .01$ ). This may be due in part to the active attempts that were being made at the time when these contingents arrived to encourage the West Indians to join the unions (see Table 11).

TABLE 10  
*Trade Union Membership by Occupation*  
TRAINEES

<i>Trade Union</i>	<i>Engineering</i>		<i>Electrical Trades</i>		<i>Miscellaneous</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>Skilled</i>	<i>Semi-skilled</i>	<i>Skilled</i>	<i>Semi-skilled</i>		
A.E.U.	1	30	—	1	2	34
E.T.U.	—	—	1	6	—	7
N.U.S.M.W.B.	—	1	—	—	—	1
T. & G.W.U.	—	1	—	—	—	1
N.U.G.M.W.	—	7	—	—	—	7
None	—	74	—	2	3	79
<i>Total</i>	1	113	1	9	5	129*

\* Twenty-eight cases unclassified.

*Key*

A.E.U.	Amalgamated Engineering Union
E.T.U.	Electrical Trades Union
N.U.S.M.W.B.	National Union of Sheet Metal Workers and Braziers
T. & G.W.U.	Transport and General Workers Union
N.U.G.M.W.	National Union of General and Municipal Workers

TABLE 11  
*Trade Union Membership*  
TECHNICIANS AND TRAINEES.

	<i>Members</i>		<i>Non-Members</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	
Technicians	148	82	32	18	180*
Trainees:					
Contingent 4-8	20	26	58	74	78
"    9	15	59	4	41	19
"    10	9		10		19
"    11	6		7		13
<i>Total</i>	50	39	79	61	129†

\* Eight cases unclassified

† Twenty-eight cases unclassified



## CHAPTER VI

# HOUSING, MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL RELATIONS

### 1. SPHERES OF PREJUDICE

So far the report has been primarily concerned with the relations between West Indians and others in the sphere of employment and the environment of the factories. In this and the next chapter relationships outside the factory, in the community at large, are considered. There are important reasons for discussing the difficulties experienced by the men in finding housing in the same context as the question of their sexual adjustment. Both are fields in which colour prejudice frequently finds its most severe expression. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the tendency towards the segregation of coloured and white peoples in the matter of housing has its origin in the same unconscious sources which lead to the frequently expressed objection to sex relations between coloured and white.

There can be little doubt that economic factors play an important part in the restrictions that are placed upon the renting or purchasing of houses or flats. But economic factors can only come into force if there is already an underlying prejudice against coloured people, and it is the source of this that is important in considering segregation and restrictions on sexual relations between coloured and white people. Bettelheim and Janowitz<sup>1</sup> in their study of ethnic intolerance find a very high correlation between prejudice in the sphere of housing and prejudice in matters of sexual and marital relations. They suggest that such a high correlation points to a common basis for these attitudes. It is suggested that if this close connection is a real one current efforts to break down segregation in housing, without at the same time dealing with prejudice in the matter of sexual relations, are likely to have only limited success.

<sup>1</sup> Bettelheim, B., and Janowitz, M., *Dynamics of Prejudice*, footnote, p. 30 (Harper, New York, 1950).

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In Britain the connection between attitudes towards sexual relations and housing for Negroes is suggested by the typical attitude which is adopted when a person letting rooms is asked to accommodate a Negro. The reaction is often one of shock such as would be expressed if someone had made an immoral suggestion. A landlady will reply, 'But what would the neighbours say?' Her attitude is reinforced by the commonly accepted stereotype which suggests that the Negro is loose in his sexual behaviour and endowed with abnormally strong sexual instincts. In the neighbourhoods to which Negroes have only recently come, it is frequently the loose sexual behaviour of which they are accused which makes them the objects of disapproval as neighbours.

As has been pointed out in the first chapter the pattern of sexual relations between Negro and white in Britain is somewhat unusual since it is the male Negro who marries the white female whereas, in other countries in the past, where racial mixture has taken place, the reverse has nearly always been the case. Wirth and Goldhamer<sup>1</sup> have suggested that in the last fifty years in the United States Negro-white intermarriage has tended to follow the same pattern as in Britain. They have pointed out that the high rate of Negro-white intermarriage in Boston at the turn of the century is almost entirely accounted for by intermarriage between Negro men and white women. Boston may to some extent be an exception but the pattern appears to be repeated to a lesser extent in New York State. Despite this more recent tendency it would still remain true to say that the largest proportion of men and women of mixed descent today trace their white ancestry to a male. It must also be pointed out that the study just quoted is concerned with Negro-white intermarriage and does not deal with the wider question of extra-marital relations between coloured and white which are probably more frequent than inter-marital relations.

It would appear that the association of the male Negro with the white female is everywhere regarded with greater disapproval than the opposite relationship.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wirth, L. and Goldhamer, N., 'Negro-white intermarriage in Recent Times', Klineberg, O., *Characteristics of the American Negro* (Harper, New York, 1944).

<sup>2</sup> Maunier, R., *Sociology of Colonies* (Kegan Paul, London, 1949). Maunier has called the partnership of white male with coloured female, masculine cross-breeding, and the partnership of coloured male with white female, feminine cross-breeding. The latter he claims is exotic, uncommon and an aberration. This is surprising since it is sometimes claimed that in France there is little or no colour prejudice and mixed marriages are accepted as more or less normal. This view does not appear to be shared by Maunier or by Geoffrey Gorer, who in *Africa Dances* gives a number of

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Whatever may be the connection between prejudice in matters of sex and in matters of housing, the fact remains that both are important criteria for judging the extent to which the Negro minority group is accepted in the community at large. The willingness to live in close proximity with other people is some measure of your acceptance and tolerance of them. The tendency for the members of a minority group to gravitate to an area where others of their racial or national group reside (expecially when this is a result of difficulty or impossibility of finding accommodation elsewhere) is an important indication of incomplete assimilation. Marriage and sexual relations, in their turn, have always been areas of social life in which the most intense in-group and out-group feelings have been expressed. The rules of exogamy and endogamy which apply between tribes and castes tend in the present day to apply between 'races' where this term assumes an emotional rather than a scientific connotation.

### 2. HOUSING AND LOCATION OF RESIDENCE

*Hostels.* One of the first problems facing the Ministry of Labour on the arrival of the West Indian workers was that of finding suitable accommodation for them. It was obvious that temporary accommodation would have to be provided in some kind of residential hostel, until such times as the men had settled down in England and could find places of their own. The first contingents were found very hastily prepared accommodation in the Y.M.C.A. in Birkenhead and in the School for the Blind in Wavertree. Subsequently a number of other hostels were opened specially for Colonials. In Liverpool there were three government hostels for Colonials. Hostels were also opened in Manchester and Bolton.

A few (less than twenty) of the Jamaicans who had arrived with the first contingent remained at the Y.M.C.A. even after other hostels had been set up. It was reported that the West Indians had their bed-sitting rooms in a corridor alongside the white inhabitants and mixed quite freely with them. Some of the other residents were permanent, but the majority were naval ratings, seamen, soldiers, air-force men and a few civilians who were there for short periods. Altogether between one hundred and fifty and two hundred of the West Indians were housed in hostels of one kind or another and the rest found private lodgings or rooms for themselves.

instances of colour prejudice in France and French colonies. Maunier says that the 'half-caste' is never accepted by public opinion as a Frenchman.



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The congregation of large numbers of coloured Colonials together in hostels appears to have aggravated the separation of the men from the white community rather than assisted in the process of assimilation. Individual West Indians, who made a bad adjustment and behaved in an irresponsible and sometimes violent manner, had a bad influence on other men, who in better company might have behaved well. The influence of the obstreperous minority had its effect in giving the Colonial hostels a bad name in the neighbourhood. It only required two or three really difficult men in a hostel of thirty or forty for the contamination to spread. Drunkenness, damage to property, assaults upon domestic staff, occurred often enough to make the work of the Warden extremely difficult. One Warden of a Colonial hostel remarked that the life of a Warden was 'nasty, brutish and short'. Quarrels between the men themselves sometimes led to physical violence. In one hostel there was one resident who was in the habit of abusing others with the much disliked term 'nigger' and he was a source of constant friction.

Furthermore, the hostels, once they began to gain a bad reputation as the result of the misdemeanours of a few, were regarded with suspicion by the general public and by the press; small incidents which would have passed unnoticed in the normal way, when occurring in the hostel led to many more West Indians being involved and resulted in the whole group gaining a bad name. One of the most difficult problems for the men in the hostels was that of sexual adjustment. It must be recognised that any group of males in a strange community may be expected to seek sexual outlets with members of the opposite sex. If this is not possible homosexual practices are likely to grow up.<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the men were found bringing girls to the hostels. Naturally the authorities could not condone this habit and every endeavour was made to put a stop to it. Nevertheless, there were frequent complaints that the hostels were being used for immoral purposes.

Although in retrospect it is possible to see that the existence of Colonial hostels may have retarded the eventual assimilation of the West Indians, it must also be recognised that the authorities at the time were faced by a very difficult problem which was made worse by the knowledge that it was not easy for a coloured man to find private lodgings in this country.

*Lodgings and other accommodation.* Many of the men did not remain in the hostels but set about finding their own place privately. The ten-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Patterson, H., and Conrad, E., *Scotsboro' Boy* (Gollancz, London, 1950).

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dency appears to have been for the worse behaved ones to remain in the hostels, although there were obvious exceptions to this. One explanation of the tendency lies in the marked class feelings that existed in the West Indian group. The skilled men who had come from relatively well-to-do families resented being associated with the 'lower class Negroes' who had succeeded in coming to England under the scheme—sometimes having forged their trade qualifications to do so.

Those who did set out to find accommodation outside the hostels (and some began looking soon after their arrival) found great difficulty. It was in this process that many of the men began to appreciate, for the first time, the nature of the attitudes of white people on Merseyside to them. One man trying to find lodgings soon after his arrival in 1941 reported his experience, in an interview with the author, as follows:

'Finding accommodation for us fellows has always been a problem since the beginning of the scheme. When we arrived we were put up in a hostel in Wavertree, but that was wanted for the army or something and we had to find a place for ourselves. Two friends and myself scoured every street round Bishopsgate without any luck. At that time we were working a 77-hour week and we had to tramp the streets after that; we were dog tired. The hostel only had hard bunks very close to the floor and I had not slept a wink for nights; it was terribly cold. Everywhere we went someone would come to the door, usually a lady; when she saw a black face at the door, she gasped with surprise and either slammed the door in our face or called out to somebody to come quickly.'

Another man said:

'Sometimes we had been given an address and assured that there was a room vacant, but whenever we got there and they saw we were coloured it was found that the room had been taken that very morning! Sometimes the landlady was more honest and said, "Well, I would not mind so much myself but I know my husband would not approve; and just think what the neighbours would say!"'

This was the experience of another early arrival:

'It has always been difficult trying to find accommodation. As soon as they know you are coloured the answer is "No!" I remember trying to find lodgings soon after I first came here. Two of us searched everywhere. One place we went to the lady actually fainted when she opened the door and saw us! Now I am married and am buying this house through the Building Society, but I have been charged an exorbitant price for it, considering that it is nearly falling to pieces. But I had to have it, there was nowhere else.'

Eventually the West Indians in search of lodgings would strike lucky and find someone who was willing to take them, but not infrequently



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the accommodation offered was dirty despite the high prices charged. One man described to the writer his horror at one place he went to:

'After trying everywhere without success and tramping up and down street after street, a boy came along on a bicycle and asked us if we were looking for digs, because his mother had some rooms they could let us have. We could hardly believe our ears! Of course, we jumped at the opportunity. We discovered afterwards that it was a half-Indian family,<sup>1</sup> so that may account for them being willing to have us. We moved in straight away and were we glad to have a warm bed for a change. We did not really have time to notice that the bed was not very clean. When we came down in the morning someone had been having breakfast before us. When we came to have ours we were not given any clean knives and forks. When we asked for some the lady just took the used ones off the table, wiped them with her apron, and gave them back to us. How we managed to get our breakfast down that morning I don't know! But for the next few mornings we pretended we were not hungry; we got out of that place just as quickly as we could!'

The difficulty of getting lodgings being so great, some of the men clubbed together to rent a furnished flat. Even here there were still difficulties. Negotiations would be conducted in writing and acceptance obtained from the owner; when the men arrived to clinch the arrangements there would be a horrified look from the owner and a hurried apology: he had decided not to let the flat after all! The men got so used to this procedure that when eventually someone did let them a flat without hesitation the men could hardly believe it. As one man put it to the writer:

'This was really quite extraordinary considering the woman had never had anything to do with coloured people before. But she left us with all her furniture, bedding and everything. We just signed on the dotted line and that was that.'

Occasionally there were landladies who were prepared to face up to the criticism of neighbours and deal with it if necessary.

'We eventually found a place near Old Swan. The lady was very nice, but she had a lot of nasty remarks made to her by her neighbours. She said she did not care, and she invited them in to tea to meet "her niggers".'

Another man expressed the view:

'You get on best if there are just one or two coloured people in the area, but not too many. At first people will stare at you, but they get over that. Sometimes you get treated better than English people at shops and places.'

<sup>1</sup> The tendency for other minority groups to be more willing to let rooms, flats and houses to the West Indians is frequently remarked upon. It is claimed, for example, that Jews are often more prepared to let accommodation to coloured people than are Gentiles—although it is also suggested that higher rents are charged! It has not been possible to make any objective investigation of these opinions.



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One place we were at, where we had a flat, the next door neighbour was very helpful. She used to come in and get a meal for us sometimes if she knew we were all working late.'

A West Indian married to an English girl since 1942 said:

'We had no difficulty about getting this unfurnished flat. But then I have to admit the wife did all the negotiations. By the time the owner discovered I was coloured, it was too late. But I have heard of cases where the ownership of a place has changed that a coloured family has been offered money to get out.'

One West Indian soon after his arrival was sent by the personnel officer of his firm to an address where he was assured there was a room vacant. On arriving and knocking at the door a lady answered, and when asked if there was a room to let she gave the familiar horrified look, said she had no rooms left, and hastily shut the door. The West Indian returned to the personnel officer with this account; the latter then returned with him to the house and asked the lady why she had said she had no rooms when in fact she knew she had. The lady apologised and said that she had been rather frightened by the sight of a coloured man. The personnel officer then pointed out to the householder that she already had one West Indian staying with her; why did she object to another? It turned out that the man already staying at the house was a very light-skinned Negro and the lady had not thought of him as coloured at all. When she had the whole matter explained to her and felt assured of the good behaviour of the second man she accepted him as a lodger, and no further difficulties arose.

The majority of the men who found private lodgings did so in the so-called south end of Liverpool where the Negro is a more familiar figure and there are regular boarding-house keepers (sometimes coloured men themselves) and landladies who are used to putting up coloured people; although the prices charged are often high for the poorest type of accommodation. Several beds are often put in one room and these shared rooms let to coloured men, who, finding it impossible to go elsewhere, are forced to take what they can get.<sup>1</sup> Many of the skilled technicians resented this tendency towards segregation and pointed

<sup>1</sup> The proceedings of a Local Rent Tribunal were reported in the *Liverpool Echo* (13th September 1949). The rent of a coloured seaman for one room with bed, bed-clothes, table and two discarded chairs from 15s. 6d. to 10s. per week. The rent paid the landlord was 29s. 6d. but the total rent received from eight sub-tenants, all of whom were coloured seamen, was £4 17s. 6d. Quoted in Silberman, L., and Spice, B., *Colour and Class in Six Liverpool Schools*, footnote, page 9 (Univeristy of Liverpool Press, 1950).

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out that they were expected to associate with a type of coloured man in England that they would not have spoken to at home. This feeling of class superiority is very marked among the skilled tradesmen who served their apprenticeship, and who resented being associated in the minds of English people with the unskilled Negro labourer. These men tended to seek accommodation outside the south end to avoid being associated with the 'lower class' Negro. This tendency has been especially marked since the end of the war. Skilled men who have been regularly employed and are now married often wish to buy their own house. Such men tend to seek accommodation elsewhere in the city. The general scarcity and expense of houses in Liverpool is aggravated for the West Indians as a result of their being coloured.

*Factory estate.* The experience of the West Indians at one factory which had its own housing estate is an interesting example of the way in which prejudice and discrimination may arise, less as a result of direct hostility towards the Negro than of uncertainty as to how others will react to a liberal policy. One of the factories which during the war had as many as fifty of the technicians working there at one time had an allocation of houses at its disposal on a nearby estate. These houses were available to employees according to length of service and the urgency of their needs in terms of family size and present accommodation. By 1946 there were twelve Jamaicans still working in the factory who had been there since soon after the factory opened. None of these men had at that time been allocated a house, although several had submitted applications. At first the allocation of houses appears to have been done by the management on a somewhat *ad hoc* basis, but subsequently a joint housing committee was set up with representatives of management and trade unions. One of the West Indians who had applied for a house began to get a little impatient; when he complained to the welfare officer he was told that, after all, he must realise that the factory was under no obligation to find him accommodation and he would do better to look for his own rather than depend upon the factory; he protested that he had also been trying on his own but without success:

'I went on hoping and waiting, but to no avail. Then I discovered that a number of white men who had joined the factory long after me had been given houses. I decided to take the matter up with the Trade Union Convener. He was a well-known Communist, but at least I knew that he would have no prejudice against me because of my colour. He promised to make enquiries and let me know if it looked as if there was any discrimination against us



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coloured fellows going on behind the scenes. It was some time before he came to see me again, but he told me that he had definite evidence that the committee did not want to give houses to the Jamaicans. The Convener said that he was going to take the matter up and if necessary he would have the whole matter brought to the notice of the Colonial Office, or whoever was responsible.

I did not think we stood much chance, but the Convener succeeded in convincing the committee that they must give us houses according to our priority rights and soon after that I was offered a place. Within a few months three other West Indians also got houses on the estate.'

Enquiries into this situation suggest that the above account is substantially true. The committee hesitated about allocating houses to Colonials because they were afraid of the reactions from other residents in the neighbourhood. It was thought that bad feeling might be created if it was felt that Colonials were given houses in preference to English people, and trouble might be created on the estate as a result. It is interesting to note that in fact the four coloured families who succeeded in obtaining houses (out of five hundred families of the estate) appear to have settled down and been accepted without question. It is of course difficult to predict what the reaction would have been had the coloured families been more in number.

### 3. SEXUAL STEREOTYPES AND ATTITUDES

Outside the field of employment there can be little doubt that the area of most intense prejudice against the West Indian Negroes is that of sexual relations.<sup>1</sup> Men who are accepted in the ordinary course of acquaintance are subjected to serious insults if seen in the company of a white girl; and the girl herself is often stigmatised among all 'respectable' people. Sexual rivalry among the neighbours and close acquaintances of the West Indians appear to be a constant source of friction. But the question of intermarriage is also the one about which people who had very little contact with the Negro feel most strongly. Many sincerely religious people and others who would claim that they are unprejudiced or even positively friendly towards Negroes tend to throw up their arms in horror at the idea of mixed marriages.

Stereotypes regarding the sexual behaviour of Negroes are among

<sup>1</sup> There is reason to believe that sexual rivalry was also a source of tension in the factories: white men resented the competition of Negroes for women, and some women were jealous of others who attached themselves to the more 'handsome' West Indians.



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those one most frequently hears repeated in Britain, and the association of coloured men and white women is one of the subjects creating the greatest antipathy between white people and Negroes. Among the stereotypes are those which attribute to the Negro an abnormally high sexual potency, a tendency towards promiscuity and a high capacity for giving and receiving sexual satisfaction from intercourse. It is often suggested that a white woman who has once had intercourse with a Negro will never return to a white man. There is very great resentment of the association of coloured men and white women in which the greater contempt is often shown towards the white girl. In fact the West Indians frequently complain that if they are seen with any white girl it is at once assumed that the girl is of a bad character. As one man put it:

'If I was seen walking down Lime Street with the Queen of England and nobody recognised who she was, it would be assumed that she was a street girl. But as soon as it was discovered that she was the Queen, it would be at once assumed that I must be the King of somewhere or other.'<sup>1</sup>

Many of the men made friends with the girls who worked in the same factories with them; but a girl would often seriously hesitate about accepting an invitation to a cinema or a dance because of the attitude their friends or their family would adopt if they found out that she had been out with a coloured man. Some girls are quite friendly towards the West Indians inside the factory but cut them dead on the street. This is naturally resented by the men, who found it difficult to understand at first and took it to be nothing but very bad manners; later they may have realised that for the girl to acknowledge a Negro in the street, while with a friend or member of her family, is to label her as little better than a prostitute in their eyes. Many of the men complained that even people who treat Negroes decently and as equals in the ordinary course of acquaintance suddenly adopt a very unpleasant manner if they are accompanied by a white girl. Some public houses for example are more likely to refuse service to a coloured man when he is accompanied by a white girl than when he is alone.

The authors of *The American Soldier*<sup>2</sup> remark upon resentment felt by the American Negro soldiers because the prejudice against them tended to result in their being forced into association with the less desirable type of woman, often prostitutes infected with venereal

<sup>1</sup> This is an interesting example of how attitudes may be modified following a change in the 'frame of reference'.

<sup>2</sup> Stouffer, *et al.*, Vol. I, p. 548 (Princeton, 1949).

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disease. This was less true of the West Indian Negro than of the American, because the majority of the men did have the opportunity to meet other girls in the course of their work at the factory. One incident was reported which reflects this difference and its appreciation by some people in the community. A West Indian technician and a girl friend visited a restaurant which was a frequent rendezvous of the West Indians. The waitress came to the table and said, 'I can serve the gentleman but not the lady.' This remark was very much resented by the West Indian, who in company with the girl left the restaurant. A complaint was subsequently made to the manageress, who apologised profusely and explained that the regulation was never meant to apply to the West Indians but was intended for the American Negroes, 'because they bring such a bad type of woman to the restaurant; we realise of course that you West Indian gentleman can meet a much better class of girl at the factory'.

### 4. SEXUAL ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIAN NEGROES

Much of the criticism of the Negro because of his alleged promiscuity and the like must be regarded as unjustified in the light of the behaviour of any large group of males uprooted from their families and their normal social relations and planted down in the somewhat disintegrated war-time community. The behaviour of English troops on the Continent or of the American troops in Britain, whilst there does not appear to have been any systematic study made, does suggest that the West Indian Negro cannot be regarded as unique in his need for sexual outlet in such circumstances. In the light of the evidence put forward by Dr. Kinsey<sup>1</sup> in his report on the sexual behaviour of the human male any suggestion of sexual 'looseness' on the part of the West Indian Negro must be regarded with considerable reservation.

A factor making the sexual adjustment of the West Indian in this country a more difficult process than it might otherwise have been is the disintegrated pattern of family life in the West Indies. As Simey<sup>2</sup> had pointed out, more or less promiscuous sexual relations are regarded as normal behaviour. Legal marriage is a sign of superior economic status rather than the expected norm of behaviour. In fact 'illegitimacy', in so far as it has any meaning in this context, is said to be as high as 70 per cent.<sup>3</sup> Common-law marriage of varying degrees of permanence

<sup>1</sup> Kinsey, A. C., *et al.*, *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (Philadelphia, 1948).

<sup>2</sup> Simey, T. S., *Welfare and Planning in the West Indies* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1946).

<sup>3</sup> Eighth Census of Jamaica, 1943, p. xlv.

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is the usual practice. In the light of these facts it is not surprising, therefore, that many of the men coming to Britain left behind families or illegitimate children which in the majority of cases they continued to support out of their earnings and allowance. Simey points out that it is quite the normal practice for the West Indian male to leave home in search of work and to make his remittances home out of his earnings. At the height of the war large sums were in fact sent from England by the West Indians to their families at home. There were others, however, who deserted their families, and the Welfare Officer received pathetic letters from wives in the Colony asking him to get in touch with their husbands because they had ceased to support them and they were destitute. In other cases the not uncommon practice occurred whereby the woman at home would find another man to take her in and look after her and her children in the absence of the father. Frequently the men made temporary or permanent attachments, which was not unnatural when they had been in Britain for several years.

In some cases it can hardly be doubted that one of the motives for coming to England was to escape from the burden of family responsibilities. In other cases the men who volunteered to come and who were already married genuinely expressed their intention of remaining faithful to their wives at home. In many instances this was backed by strong religious convictions and a real determination to live a clean straightforward life in Britain. But as war-time experience in most countries showed, time and distance take their toll even in the best-intentioned cases. Sometimes a man received letters from relatives and friends at home telling him that his wife had not remained faithful. Others found the strain of a celibate life too much and eventually went to live with a girl. In a few cases divorce took place and the man married again.

Sexual adjustment was as difficult for the men in lodgings as for those in hostels. Landladies could hardly be expected to permit girls to be brought to the men's bedrooms: yet the greater degree of sexual freedom that many of the men had known in the West Indies made it difficult for them to understand why there should be so much objection to what seemed to them perfectly natural behaviour.

Sexual maladjustment is sometimes at the bottom of the criminal behaviour found among some West Indians. One or two received convictions for 'living off immoral earnings' and at least one for homosexual practices. A charge of rape also occurred.



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*Illegitimacy.* There is no reliable evidence to support the frequently made allegation that the number of illegitimate children whose fathers were West Indians was proportionately greater than for any other male group in the community.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the stigma which is attached to any association between coloured men and white girls is greatest when it comes to the question of marriage. Parents of girls who have become pregnant by a coloured man have been known to take the greatest exception to the genuine desire of the man to marry their daughter. One parent was alleged to have told one of the West Indians that he would rather his daughter died in childbirth than consider such an idea. Whereas the unmarried mother of a white child can sometimes hide her circumstances by a judicial marriage with another man, the birth of a coloured child would make this impossible.

The fact that there was so much prejudice against any friendship between white girls and coloured men meant that meetings often had to take place secretly, and this was naturally conducive to sexual intimacies that would not otherwise take place. As one man put it:

'The trouble is that what a white man can do and get away with will always be noticeable if a coloured man does the same thing. If there are chocolate biscuits at the factory canteen white men can go up several times and get more than their share. But if a coloured man goes up twice he is spotted at once. In the same way a white girl who goes out with a coloured man is marked at once. One of the biggest difficulties is the secrecy that always has to surround any friendship between a decent white girl and a coloured man. It means that they cannot go to a cinema or dance hall together in case they are seen by parents and friends. The result is too much courting in the back alley and that always leads to trouble.'

The peculiar difficulties of the unmarried mother of a coloured child and the problems facing the child itself as it grows up were described by Dr. Harold Moody in an article reprinted from *The World's Children* in a pamphlet published by the League of Coloured Peoples in 1946<sup>2</sup> dealing with the question of illegitimate children born of coloured American fathers.

Dr. Moody wrote:

'Few [social problems] are more baffling than one which has arisen in Great Britain, and possibly in other countries, the problem of the illegitimate

<sup>1</sup> Even welfare workers concerned with coloured children have made this statement, but comparative figures of children dealt with by the Church of England Board of Moral Welfare do not appear to lend support to the view.

<sup>2</sup> McNeill, S., *Illegitimate Children of English mothers and Coloured Americans* (League of Coloured Peoples, London, 1946).

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child born of a "white" mother and a "coloured" serviceman. In the present state of public opinion in white countries, such children are subject to peculiar social disadvantages. In such communities, the half-coloured child is always in an ambiguous position; it is only the more enlightened and more liberal citizens who are willing to ignore his minority characteristics and give him a place in their community parallel with that of their normally begotten children. When what public opinion regards as the "taint" of illegitimacy is added to the disadvantage of mixed race, the chances of the child's having a fair opportunity for development and service are much reduced.'

Many of the West Indians had the sincerest affection for the girls they 'got into trouble' and for the children which resulted, and were genuinely distressed by the attitudes expressed towards the girl. There were further difficulties to be faced if any attempt was made to have the child adopted or a nursery found for it. One man complained to the Welfare Officer in the following terms about the treatment his girl friend had received:

'This girl has stood up to a lot of insults and prejudicial remarks from friends and relatives; many of her friends broke with her because she openly kept my company (a "nigger"), but she stuck to me all along; would it be fair to betray her now? Miss —— at the factory told V. that she should be ashamed to be seen talking to a "nigger"; she wants to make arrangements to have the baby adopted. Miss ——, with ideas of men like me being inferior, never gave thought that I might love my baby and want it too. I love V.—and I am going to look after her; in the eyes of her parents I am a dirty black nigger, as they once said; I am a nigger, but I have a heart and feelings, that is why I am going to do my duty to V.'

'About two weeks ago V. left here to go home to her mother's address. Previously whenever she tried to go home her father always tried to put her out. . . . I wrote to her but had no answer . . . I am wondering about the baby. They will never have a dark baby in their house. That is one of the reasons why they kept throwing V. back at me. . . .'

### 5. MARRIAGE OF WEST INDIANS

In view of the somewhat ambiguous use of the word 'married' in this context (because of the confusion between legal and common-law marriages) and the fact that the Ministry of Labour records cannot be considered to be entirely reliable with regard to information about marital status, it is difficult to state accurately the number of West Indians who were married whilst they were in Britain. As far as the Ministry's records indicate, 31 per cent of the technicians and 11 per cent of the trainees were married on arrival. The difference, which is statistically significant, is probably due to the fact that the

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trainees tended to be younger men. Up to the time of the record (1944) 15 per cent of the technicians and 22 per cent of the trainees had married in England. There were a few cases on record (approximately 5 per cent) where there was definite evidence that the man had established a union in the West Indies and in Britain.

Although these figures probably underestimate the number of unions that took place and overestimate the number of legal marriages, the extent of intermarriage between the West Indians and white girls cannot be taken as an indication of assimilation but rather the contrary. Mention has already been made of the prejudice against the association of Negroes and white girls in the community. These feelings were naturally extended to the idea of intermarriage. In a number of cases girls proposing to marry one of the West Indians were evicted by their families and forbidden to come near home again unless they gave up the idea of marrying coloured men. Sometimes the arrival of a baby would be the occasion of some measure of reconciliation, but the father was rarely accepted into the family circle. There were some notable exceptions to this attitude, where the families concerned invited the West Indian to the home as soon as it was known that the daughter was interested in him, and some lasting friendships were established. In some cases the household became a 'home from home' for many of the West Indians, who welcomed the opportunity of having normal friendly relations with an English family. Such cases seem to have been the exception rather than the rule.

Where the immigrant group marrying into the main community tends to marry into a social class somewhat below that attained by the immigrant, this must modify the extent to which marriage can be regarded as an indication of assimilation. There is no detailed evidence available on this point which could in any way be regarded as conclusive; but the West Indians often complain that the girls they meet in Britain seem to have a very narrow range of interests (dancing and films) and that if they try to discuss anything else, such as world affairs, politics, etc., the English girl is dull and bored. This may suggest that the education level of the West Indians tends to be above that of the girls he is able to meet. It has also been suggested that there is a tendency for Negroes in Liverpool to marry girls who are themselves isolates in their own group: girls from other parts of the country living in Liverpool, or girls who have separated from their families owing to religious differences.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cullins, S., 'Social Position of Women in Coloured Groupings in Britain', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 16, No. 6, Dec. 1951.



## CHAPTER VII

### FURTHER ASPECTS OF PREJUDICE AND CONFLICT

**I**F the pattern of racial relations in the United States were to be repeated in Britain, one would expect to find that Negroes are subject to restrictions and restraints in a number of walks of life where they are likely to come across white people. Partial or complete segregation and varying degrees of discrimination against Negroes in parts of America are to be found in hotels, restaurants, dance halls, cinemas, shops, etc., as well as in semi-public places such as banks, post offices, and on public transport. The extent of such discrimination varies a great deal from place to place in the United States<sup>1</sup> and nowhere in Britain is it as marked as in the southern States of America.

There is no segregation or discrimination in Britain on any form of public transport or in any public place such as a bank, post office, or government office. That is not to say that individual people serving in such places do not express some prejudice against Negroes. Undoubtedly they do on occasions, but official policy does not condone such practices. In private and commercial establishments the position is rather more complicated. A business would seldom openly maintain that it operates a colour bar; but discrimination may work in more subtle ways. A Negro who attempts to make a booking in a hotel may find that there are no rooms available and that he is not encouraged to use the lounges or dining rooms even for a particular occasion. He will probably be told by the hall porter that this is a 'private hotel' and that non-residents are not admitted, even though, as is often the case, a notice is displayed outside welcoming non-residents for meals. In such indirect ways will the Negro be made to feel that he is not wanted. It is not suggested that this happens frequently or in more than a few places in any particular town; but there is ample evidence to show that it

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, C. S., *Pattern of Negro Segregation* (Harper, New York, 1943).

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happens often enough to be a source of irritation and annoyance to coloured people in Britain.

In this chapter the extent to which the West Indian Negroes participated in social activities in the community will be considered, including such questions as their use of dance halls, restaurants, and their attendance at churches. This will be followed by a detailed study of one serious instance of conflict in the community when disturbances between coloured and white people, involving the police, occurred.

### 1. PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

In discussing this question it must be recognised that before the second world war the size of the coloured population in Liverpool was small compared with the numbers of Negroes who were in the city during the war: therefore the question of the coloured community using recreational facilities on any large scale did not arise so much. One dance hall in the centre of the south end had operated a colour bar since it opened: but this had not caused any serious problems for the coloured population before the arrival of the West Indians, because there was, in any case, little inclination on the part of local coloured people to use the hall. The arrival of the West Indian technicians in Liverpool and the trainees in Manchester and Bolton created a new situation. These men had not the home attachments that the local population had, and naturally wanted to make the best use of the entertainments and recreational facilities available. Dancing, particularly, was a favourite pastime. Within a few months of their arrival the men found that the dance hall in the south end was operating a colour bar. One man described to me his experience in December 1941:

'On the night of December 20th between 8.30 and 9 p.m. Mr. X, who is another Jamaican technician, and myself attended the — Ballroom: we were accompanied by two ladies. We procured our tickets from the office downstairs and had our hats and coats checked. We then proceeded to gain entrance to the dance hall, at which door we were told by the attendant that we should have to see the manager before being allowed in. On his arrival he told us we would not be allowed in the dance hall from the fact that we were coloured. Our tickets were then taken away and the price of same refunded. We were requested to leave the premises.

This matter was subsequently taken up by the Welfare Officer with the manager of the dance hall, who maintained it was a general policy of the company and it would be necessary to obtain the sanction of the managing director in London before it could be changed. Negotiations

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were begun with the managing director, but do not appear to have borne fruit, as a similar incident was reported by another man some six months later.

Despite this initial colour bar in a number of hotels and places of entertainment in Liverpool, many places were quite prepared to admit coloured persons and appear to have valued their patronage. There were, on the other hand, some public-houses where a West Indian could be served in the public bar but not in the parlour. These small slights, although resented by the men, were not felt to be serious.

There followed a period of about a year during the major part of 1942 when there appears to have been some diminution in the expression of prejudice and discrimination against the West Indians in the community at large. They were free to use the majority of dance halls and public-houses in the city, and, in fact, became regular and well-liked patrons of a number of them. Similar good conditions appear to have operated in Manchester, Warrington and Bolton, where the other West Indians were living.

### 2. INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN TROOPS

The arrival in the north of England during 1943 of large numbers of both coloured and white American troops led to a serious deterioration in the state of racial relations.

The attitude of American white troops towards American or British Negroes was not uniform. There were undoubtedly many white Americans who deplored the attitude that some of their fellow countrymen habitually adopt towards coloured persons. On the whole white Americans from the South appeared to have the greatest difficulty in adjusting to the different pattern of racial attitudes that is generally exhibited in Britain. Hall<sup>1</sup> has pointed out that the pattern of racial relations in the United States Army followed closely that found in American civilian life and was sometimes aggravated by an over-valuation on the part of commanding officers of the seriousness of the racial problem and the possibility of conflict. In Europe a letter was sent to all troops explaining that attitudes towards the Negro in England and France were not the same as in the United States and that the policy of the U.S. Army would not deviate from that of the local populations.

<sup>1</sup> Hall, E. T. (Jr.), 'Race Prejudice and Negro-White Relations in the Army', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, No. 5, March 1947.



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Nevertheless, in order to minimise possible conflict, small towns in the vicinity of large concentrations of troops were placed out of bounds to coloured and white troops on alternate nights. This did not, of course, prevent the American white troops from coming into contact with British coloured troops or civilians, such as the West Indian technicians and trainees. Furthermore, it seems that the American Negro was much more prepared to avoid conflict with the American white by leaving a dance hall or restaurant when white Americans arrived; but such acceptance and submission to whites was not part of the culture pattern of the West Indian Negro, who was much more likely to stand up to the contemptuous attitude expressed by some of the American white troops by equally contemptuous retorts; this often led to an exchange of physical blows.

The research branch of the U.S. Army in their study of the adjustment of the American soldier in the second world war<sup>1</sup> point out the resentment felt by American coloured troops, of the way in which their white fellow countrymen were influencing the relatively liberal attitudes of the English. In their chapter on the adjustment of the American Negro soldier the authors quote Negroes as making the following statements about the influence of American whites on the behaviour attitudes of the English:

'I am a Negro over doing my part to help win this war and the American, so then white man come here with his prejudice and narrow mind and spread propaganda among the English people.'

'If the English people would do more towards treating the coloured soldiers like human beings it would cut out some of the friction in the British Isles. We are treated not as soldiers but as something to be gaped at and held up to ridicule not by the English people but by the American. They are the ones who are causing all the trouble.'

'Instead of leaving our problems of this sort at home the Americans (white) have tried to instill their ways and actions over here and try to make the English do things like they have done and become terribly indignant when they don't all do things like they would see them done.'

'Here in England a few of the narrow-minded possibly southern white American soldiers have already poisoned the mind of the few British people towards us. States that we were "bears without tails", "wild", "sex-crazy maniacs", etc.'

The above point of view was largely shared by the British West Indian Negroes in this country; they too considered that a good deal of the prejudice and discrimination which by 1943 they were beginning to feel

<sup>1</sup> Stouffer, S. A., *The American Soldier*, Vol. 1 (Princeton, 1949).

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seriously could be attributed to the influence of white American troops. One of these complained in a letter to the Welfare Officer in 1942:

'We the Negroes had to suffer quite a lot of bars when we came here first but now it is worse. The Americans have got some power over things that I can't understand. There used to be a few dance halls that we could go to after a week's work, or whenever one feel like dancing. In these dances one could have fun with other people and meet the boys that are living far away. Now when we enter these halls all one can hear is "No Negroes". When we ask why, this is always the answer, "Well, you see, the Americans don't like the Negroes in the same place where they have fun." Even in Glasgow I was told personal this. "If we let you in they will try to make fight for they fight with their own American Negroes." So we have no fun: as some of the boys said, "It's work and bed for the men without a country." Sometimes you'll hear of the boys getting into trouble by fighting and so on. The bottom is mainly how much they had to put up with.'

It is not surprising that the imposition of colour bars at several places habitually used by the West Indians created a great deal of dissatisfaction among the men; the growing tension was reflected in the monthly reports of the Welfare Officer.

In November 1943 it was reported:

'An incident occurred at a ballroom, in Liverpool, when some of our technicians came in to conflict with white American soldiers. The upshot was a fight and minor injuries to one technician and a razor slash of an Englishman. The culprit has not been found and so no prosecution took place. On interview with the C.I.D. authorities, it was definitely stated that the Americans were proved to be aggressive. As a consequence of this upheaval a temporary bar against Jamaicans was established about which the manager of the ballroom was seen. It was finally arranged that membership tickets should be given to all Jamaicans for attendance on request so that the right to refuse entry of undesirables could be preserved.'

December 1943:

'The question of barring dance halls in the area to Negro visitors, which includes our technicians and trainees, has been brought before the public eye through another incident at Warrington. The feeling amongst technicians and trainees is very strong, and it is hoped that some way out can be found and the atmosphere of discrimination removed.'

January 1944:

'The atmosphere of dissatisfaction over the banning of dance halls to coloured Colonial subjects in Liverpool is still present. Technicians and trainees are holding meetings so as to determine the best action to be taken in the matter.'

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February 1944:

'A feeling is growing in respect of the ban that has been placed on coloured people attending dance halls in Liverpool. R—— cafe, which, until a day or two ago, has been open to them, is now closed.'

The incident referred to occurred at a dance hall in Warrington in December 1943 when a party of American soldiers demanded the ejection of one of the Jamaican technicians who was dancing with a white girl. The man in question was reported to be of good character and accepted with good feeling at factory dances, etc. The Welfare Officer at Manchester described him as a quiet and diffident fellow who attended regularly at work. The manager of the dance hall refused the request of the American soldiers that the West Indian should be ejected. He was reported to have said:

'I refused to turn H. out and afterwards the boy, who was very upset, said he would promise never to come to the hall again. I told him that so long as he paid his admission money the doors would be open to him and he would be welcome.'

Soon after the incident the manager received a letter from the local commanding officer of the U.S. Army as follows:

'It is not our intention to dictate the policies of privately owned establishments, but in the interest of eliminating trouble in which our troops may be involved we would appreciate your co-operation in prohibiting Negroes from attending the dances.'

Subsequently this dance hall was placed out of bounds to all troops both American and British, including Dominion. The manager of this dance hall later expressed the view that his 'idealistic' stand of 'fit to fight, fit to mix' could not be maintained because the receipts of the dance hall had fallen so much since the ban that he was in danger of going out of business.<sup>1</sup>

A second important incident occurred at about the same time in

<sup>1</sup> As a result of this incident an M.P. tabled a question in the House of Commons. 'Mr. Goldie asked the Secretary of State for War upon what grounds a dance hall of which he had been informed had been placed out of bounds to Army troops: and whether such a ban was imposed after consultation with the American military authorities or in consequence of a similar ban imposed by them.' Sir J. Grigg replied in a written answer: 'It became necessary to take action on account of overcrowding in the hall on a number of occasions. The hall was not put out of bounds in consequence of any action by the American military authorities but as is usual and natural in such circumstances the American authorities as well as the R.A.F. and civil police were consulted beforehand about the action which the British military authorities proposed to take.'

Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol. 395, 17th December, 1943.



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November 1943. A series of clashes between West Indians and American white troops at a well-known dance hall in Liverpool led to the imposition of a colour bar. One of the West Indians, a trainee from the Leeward Islands, endeavoured to gain admission to this dance hall where he had previously been on several occasions. He was refused admission. He then returned home and donned his Home Guard uniform and tried once more. He claimed that he was again refused admission. The reaction to this incident was to report to his major, saying that as his uniform had been insulted he was not going to do Home Guard duty any more, and that the authorities were free to take whatever action they wished. The man was in fact prosecuted for the offence of refusing to do Home Guard duties and a fine of £5 was imposed. An appeal against this verdict was made, which was not heard until the Quarter Sessions of August 1944.

The case aroused considerable interest in Liverpool and there were in court a dozen or more West Indians together with a large number of men in khaki and members of the A.T.S. who witnessed the proceedings under an arrangement with Army education authorities. The Recorder in giving his decision was reported as saying:

'I am told that the position of coloured people has somewhat changed since the nationals of another of our allies joined us in this country. I am not concerned with the views of our allies on the question of colour. My own experience in dealing with our allies, the citizens of the United States, is that most of the people I meet hold the same views as I do upon colour, and are no more likely to be offended by the presence of coloured people than I am. If anything that I say may offend citizens of some allied countries, let me say that the Allied Nations make up a democratic world and if they have colour prejudice they must occasionally come into collisions with people who have not. I happen to be one who has not.

'When people come here to risk their lives they are entitled to think they are coming to conditions of decency and order fit for the title of imperial in its best sense. If they find that what I am inclined to call a noisy and intolerant minority are not prepared to give them equal rights I think they have a right to be angry.

'If you accept aid from coloured people you accept it as from friends, whose aid you are prepared to receive, and they should be the first to receive justice at your hands. But they do not receive it and it is a shameful business. Mr. R. is breaking the law when, having come here to serve his country, he refuses to be insulted. The fact that he is guilty should be more the subject for laughter than anything else. I cannot allow Mr. R's appeal on the question of principle, because the law was against him. But where the law is ridiculous one might as well draw attention to the fact. The fine of £5 will be reduced to one farthing and Mr. R. will be allowed the costs of the appeal.'

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### 3. EFFORTS TO REMOVE THE COLOUR BAR

The compromise arrangement whereby special entry permits were issued to West Indians to enable the management to keep out 'undesirables' from the dance hall did not satisfy the men who regarded this as only a veiled form of discrimination. The matter was taken up seriously by the Colonial Office and discussion took place with the managements of the various establishments concerned. Each pointed out that they had no personal animosity towards Colonials; in fact they had pursued an open policy until the incidents between coloured and white men (particularly Americans) became so serious that as a result their receipts were falling off considerably. The alternative of barring Americans was considered but rejected as being impracticable—largely because the latter provided a large proportion of the income of the dance establishments. Each establishment concerned said that they would be prepared to consider relaxing their bar, if other halls did likewise; but they were not prepared to act independently and be flooded with coloured men as a result. These negotiations were commenced in 1944, but it was not until the war was over and the majority of Americans had returned home that any marked change appeared to have taken place. In the present day none of the dance halls or restaurants operate a rigid colour bar, although one hall prefers coloured men to bring their own partners; this minimises the possibility of offence being taken by white girls not wishing to dance with a coloured man.

#### *Setting up a Community Centre for Coloured People*

Members of the Association for the Welfare of Coloured People and other leading citizens of Liverpool had been long concerned about the social, recreational and cultural needs of the coloured population of the city; as early as 1942 the idea of a special community centre had been put forward. The influx of American and British Negroes into the city and the difficulties arising as a result of the colour bar operating in many places in the neighbourhood increased the feeling that there was a great need for a centre which would provide for the special needs of the coloured population. An appeal by several interested and prominent white citizens was first launched in 1943<sup>1</sup> in the following terms:

'One of the most urgent social problems of the present time is the welfare of the large number of coloured men, women and children of Merseyside, particularly those of African origin, whether resident for a long period in our

<sup>1</sup> Although the appeal for the centre was launched in September 1943 and a start was made by running a day nursery for children, the actual centre was not opened in its present premises until September 1946.



## FURTHER ASPECTS OF PREJUDICE AND CONFLICT

midst or visitors serving Great Britain in the factories or on the high seas. We are anxious to assist these people in developing a fuller and more progressive way of life, which will enrich both themselves and the community in which they are living, and which, by special attention to the welfare of coloured children, will lay in them the foundations of good citizenship.

'Accordingly a group of interested people have been meeting together during the past few months to consider, with representatives of the coloured people, the most effective practical means of attaining our common goal. Unanimous support has been received for the establishment of a Community Centre for men, women and children, which would be a focus for their cultural, social and recreational life, and where in particular special facilities would be available for the welfare and continued education of children and adolescents.'

Although there appears to have been unanimous support for the idea of such a centre at the meeting called to discuss it, there was in fact a wide divergence of opinion among coloured and white people in Liverpool as a whole. It was felt by many that the establishment of a special community centre for coloured people would add to the segregation already existing and aggravate rather than alleviate the problems of the Negro community in Liverpool. Others criticised on similar grounds the proposed location of the centre in the south end of Liverpool and maintained that the segregational tendency would be minimised if the centre was set up in some other part of the city. In reply to this argument it was claimed, not without justification, that the actual use made of a centre in some other part of a city would be so much less as to make its establishment pointless.

There was further divergence of view over the question of whether the centre was intended primarily to serve the needs of the local coloured population or of the Colonials, who were thought to be less permanently in Liverpool. Arising out of the general colour bar in many places of recreation in the city in 1944, the Honorary Secretary of the community centre (before it was actually opened) made the following statement:

'Having in view the serious consequences of the imposition of a colour bar in the Merseyside area, we are planning, as a practical contribution to the solution of the many subtle social and psychological problems involved, a worthy Community Centre for cultural, social, recreational and educational activities.'

This plan has three objects in view:

(1) To provide a suitable centre where coloured folk, both Colonials and resident people of African origin, or descent, shall be in a position to invite white friends to join with them in the various activities proposed, but where coloured people shall cease to hold a minority position, but shall be in the majority.



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(2) To promote the social and cultural well-being of resident and visiting coloured people, whether half-castes or pure blooded, and to give them extended opportunities of fitting in happily in the British social system.

(3) To promote friendly relations between coloured peoples of different origins (e.g. West Africans and West Indians), and to break down the barriers of class-consciousness, educational superiority and snobbery amongst coloured people.'

The Honorary Secretary of the centre, speaking in a personal capacity, said he would deprecate any attempt, by the setting up of a separate institution or club for coloured Colonials, to widen the gap which already existed between them and the resident coloured population. He felt that only by promoting the unity of such peoples in a single large-scale organisation could their best interests, in the long-run, be served.

A compromise between these conflicting views was reached by the emphasis that has always been placed upon the fact that the centre was for the use of all coloured people and *their white friends* and this is actually written into the Articles of Association of the limited company that was formed to manage the affairs of the community centre. The premises were acquired as a result of a large grant from the Colonial Office and considerable sums were subscribed to the centre from private individuals and from commercial firms and shipping companies with interests in the Colonies. A council was set up predominantly of white people to manage the centre and a warden appointed who in the first two instances has been white. The appointment was made early in 1950 of a young West Indian with social science training.<sup>1</sup>

Since its opening in September 1946 the centre has had a chequered history. Despite the initial sums donated, it had by 1949 acquired a large deficit. For a period the centre became notorious as a place of vice; prostitution, drug peddling and violence occurred until, eventually, it had to be closed for a period until a new warden could be appointed and stricter control over activities ensured. In fact, after being closed for six months a number of the coloured members came together and formed a house committee which took charge of the centre in the absence of a warden, and successfully ran dances and other activities on three nights a week. The new régime was so successful that renewed efforts were made to raise money for the appointment of a full-time warden.

<sup>1</sup> This Warden resigned October 1951, and an Englishman was appointed in his place, who has also resigned, so great are the difficulties facing anyone in this task. See also p. 166.

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After the appointment of a new warden considerable success was achieved in running recreational activities, although the popularity of educational activities such as the W.E.A. discussion group fluctuated from time to time. There was a minimum of disturbance and violence and no illegal or immoral proceedings under the new management. There were occasional fights and the warden was threatened once or twice. But the persons mainly responsible for this unruly behaviour were a small group of very maladjusted Liverpool-born coloured youths, who strongly resented the Colonials and the American Negroes, who tended to come in large numbers.

Unfortunately, the reputation for vice that the centre gained during the earlier period was not forgotten by many of the more respectable coloured and white people in the neighbourhood. Furthermore the 'better class' West Indians tended to regard the coloured community centre as a place primarily for the less well educated and adjusted coloured people. The community centre (and the south end generally) was regarded as a symbol of non-assimilation, segregation, and inferiority and was spurned by the ambitious Colonial endeavouring to gain acceptance in better class areas of the city. This is reflected in some of the following remarks made by West Indians in the course of interviews:

'You ask why so many people who used to go to the centre don't do so now. I don't know. It is a problem; it has a very bad name among many people; I can't mention it to some of my friends without a storm of protest. Of course it is much better run now than it used to be, but it takes a long while for a bad reputation to die down. In any case one of the problems about Liverpool is that all classes of coloured people have to mix together—ones you wouldn't look at at home. The better type of Jamaican does not want to associate with the type of person who goes to the Community Centre.'

Another West Indian said:

'I feel a little guilty; I promised to go along and help at the Community Centre, but I haven't been. There was a time when I used to go regularly, but it got so rough it was dangerous. I couldn't run the risk of a physical injury at a place like that—what would people say at work the next day? Of course one of the biggest problems facing the place is raising funds: I am glad to hear they have got their accounts straightened out a bit.'

'One of the difficulties about West Indians going along to the centre is that local coloured people tend to resent our intrusion into a place which they feel ought to be for them. On the other hand, not many of the local people can take on responsible jobs and help much.'

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Another said:

'I used to be a member of the Community Centre but I haven't been for a long while. It puzzles me to know just what the place is really for. I think it ought to be a place where coloured people could go and feel at home: they could have meetings and do things they can't do elsewhere; but when we wanted a band practice there they wanted to charge for the room. If the place is being run to make money it is doomed to fail. Anyway most of the older coloured men and their families do not want choirs and drama and discussion. They just want somewhere they can go and sit and talk or have a drink. I think the centre would do much better if it had a bar.'

### 4. OTHER SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

There are several other cafés and clubs in the neighbourhood of the south end of Liverpool, and one farther out, which cater primarily for coloured Colonials. It is usual for each to be run by a man of a particular nationality who caters especially for his own countrymen, preparing food after their fashion. There is a café which is run by a Somali for Somalis, although other coloured men also go there; there are Indian, West African, West Indian and Chinese cafés. There are two private clubs catering for Colonials: both have licences for beers, wines and spirits and one is known as a typical 'hotspot' where you only go if you have a lot of money to 'blue'. Both have a small band and dance floor. White people rarely go to these clubs or cafés apart from the white girl friends of the coloured Colonials. This is also true of the community centre: the majority of the white members and attenders are young girls, apart from students and other helpers.

The West Indians are very keen on sports and many are members of local cricket and darts clubs. There is one all-Colonial darts club; the latter was once refused a match with a white club, but an apology was later made and a match arranged. The West Indians are also accepted freely in the sports and recreational activities in the factories in which they work. In one factory a West Indian (not one who came to England under the scheme) was for several years secretary of the sports club. On one factory estate where there is a community centre the West Indian families are accepted without question, though in fact they do not make much use of its facilities.

### *Churches*

The question of Colonials and church attendance is an interesting one. A very high proportion of the Colonials, including the West Indians, when at home, were attached to one or other denomination of



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the Christian Church and were regular attenders. On arrival in Britain this habit of church attendance appears to have fallen off very rapidly. Before the war there was a flourishing church run by a coloured man who claimed to have been a disciple of Mary Slessor and to be ordained. This church still exists but has not nearly the following it once had. The Roman Catholic Church has a special mission to coloured people in a lock-up shop in the south end. Some Colonials claim that they are not at all welcome in the local Catholic church and are encouraged to attend this mission instead. One man at least claims that he was refused Mass at the 'white church' and told he must go to the mission. He says that he complained to the Roman Catholic Archbishop, who was sympathetic and told him to attend at the Cathedral for Mass: but the man in question says that he was so put off the church after this incident that he has not been back since. There appear to be three main types of reason (or excuse) given by West Indians for not attending church in England. Some claim that their experiences of colour prejudice in England have made them cynical about Christianity; others say that they have got out of the habit here because so few people generally seem to go to church; and a third group say that when they go to church they are embarrassed by the over-demonstrative and naïve way in which they are 'welcomed' that they are discouraged from going again. The following are some of the comments made in the course of interviews by various West Indians:

'I went to church for a bit when I first came here; then I stopped. I don't quite know why; I think perhaps it is because at home all the ministers talk about brotherly love and so on, and then you come and find they haven't even converted the English people. I don't believe in all these missions. I think they just keep the Colonial people in subjection. When we see what things are really like here we turn our backs on the minister as a traitor. People in the Colonies take the Bible stories too literally. When you get to England you find that Christianity is just a veneer. The parson is just a racketeer. . . .'

'I think we Colonials stop going to church when we hear of ministers who tell their congregations that they must not fraternise with coloured people and who tell girls that they ought to know better than to be seen out with a coloured man. . . .'

'I don't know why I stopped going to church except that during the war we did a lot of overtime and got out of the habit. Anyway so few people in England go I should feel embarrassed to go by myself. If my landlady were to say one day, "Let's go to church on Sunday", I should probably be pleased to go with her. Anyway, I began to get different ideas about the church since I came over here. At home all the churches are friendly and it does not matter whether you are a Protestant or a Catholic. Not even when it comes to marriage. Over here people take their religious differences much too seriously.

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Look at these Orange Day processions in Liverpool—half the people who join in them never go to church anyway. It's just superstition and ignorance!

'I went to church when I first came here but I was taken out to the front and introduced as "our Brother from a distant land". They made such a fuss trying to show how "unprejudiced" they were it just made me sick. I didn't go back.'

### 5. ATTITUDES AND RELATIONSHIPS

#### *Attitudes*

It is clear from the data already presented that attitudes towards the West Indians varied a great deal from person to person. There appears to be a range of attitudes from complete tolerance and acceptance of the coloured immigrants to their strong rejection. Despite this wide range of attitudes it is possible to observe the way in which stereotyped views about Negroes still persist and have been widely accepted. An interesting example is the way slight differences in the use of words and phrases were frequently the source of friction, and sometimes of amusement. One man gave the following example:

'After I had been in the factory a short while, one man came up to me and said, "You know, you must be a very intelligent man—you have only been here four weeks, but you speak English perfectly already." But sometimes our English got us into difficulties. For example, at home we call a dark Christmas pudding, "black pudding". One day my landlady asked me if I liked "black pudding" and I said "Yes." But when she put that stuff made from pigs' blood and fat on the table it nearly made me sick to look at it.'

'In the factory they began to serve curried rice for the benefit of the West Indians. At first the white men used to call it "niggers' food", but after a while they got to like it too; and now we have a job to get there before it has all gone.'

The term 'nigger' has been the source of enormous tension and bad feeling. As used in England it is a familiar term for coloured people in general, and rarely has any malicious intent behind it, beyond the Englishman's usually humorous contempt for the stranger. By the West Indian the term is regarded as very abusive, especially if used by a white man towards a Negro, and is tantamount to 'bastard' in English. It was not surprising, therefore, that the men who arrived in Liverpool (in the middle of a blitz) and heard, on stepping out of the station, 'Look at them bunch of niggers' hardly regarded this as a welcome. The term is still to this day regarded with considerable resentment by West Indians who hear its frequent use by English people.

Another complaint the West Indian makes against English people is



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their ignorance about the Colonies and the West Indies in particular. The men point out that in their school curriculum they learn all the details of English geography and history; but the average Englishman has no idea where Jamaica is. Such questions as 'What language do you speak? Do you wear clothes at home? What part of Africa is Jamaica in? do not improve the West Indians' opinion of the English, and clearly limit the ability of the latter to accept and understand the West Indian. Perhaps even more liable to create tension is the attitude of the person who thinks he 'knows all about "niggers",' having been out in the Colonies for years.

The initial strangeness of the Negro to English people is also a cause of artificial barriers to communication, which persist even when goodwill is present, as the following account suggests:

'I am now working at a new atomic energy site for a research factory where we are putting in all the electrical installations. There are one or two African labourers there, one Liverpool-born coloured man who is an electrician's mate. I am the only skilled Negro there. At first some of the men who had worked in R.E.M.E. in East Africa during the war were surprised to find a Negro who was a skilled man; they said that when they were in Africa the coloured man did all the bag-carrying. I pointed out to them that when I am in England I have to get a white man or woman to do *my* chores for me—who else is there to do it? They had not thought of it that way before.

'There was one man in the shop who behaved rather oddly towards me at first and I thought he was prejudiced. But I discovered afterwards that he was just afraid to make the first move in conversation. Now he is a good friend. The foreman is a bit strange too. The others call him "Jack" but he does not seem to like me to call him that. If he gives me any orders he always gives them through the chargehand. On the other hand when I had bad tooth trouble and was told by the dentist that I must work indoors out of the cold for a while the foreman was very decent about it, and arranged it at once.'

An interesting fact arising out of the interviews conducted in the course of the research is that however free the individual may himself have been from experiences of discrimination, he nevertheless identifies himself very closely with other coloured people and repeats the incidents that have been experienced by others, even though admitting he himself has not had such experiences.

'Personally, I have had very few experiences of discrimination, although I know many of my friends who have. In fact, some of us when we hear that such and such a place is operating a colour bar, we go along there purposely just to see what would happen. Sometimes we get in, and sometimes we are refused. In a way it is quite a novel experience to be turned out and we like arguing it out with the management and pointing out that we are British and entitled to our rights.'



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Another West Indian, who is of dark complexion, said:

'On the whole, I have been very lucky; I have rarely had any trouble; of course, you have petty slights and people make rude remarks on the streets. But I don't take any notice. In fact, I hardly think of myself as coloured at all—I hardly ever notice if people are being rude. The trouble is that there are some men who are too self-conscious about their colour—they tend to create a fuss about any little thing, and that just leads to trouble.'

One point which is frequently mentioned by West Indians in England is that the uncertainty about whether or not one is going to be accepted or rejected by people in different places is a source of anxiety. Many say that they prefer the American system of segregation and colour bar at certain places 'because then you know where you stand—you don't have to worry all the time what people are thinking. You go to a place if they accept coloured people and stay away if they don't. Over here you never know what to do. You get to fear the worst.'

The tendency to expect the worst applies in both directions. The tendency for English people to accept the stereotype of the Negro is paralleled by the West Indian's tendency to assume that the Englishman is certain to be prejudiced against him. This tendency is noticed in the attitudes of coloured people towards the police and vice versa.<sup>1</sup> The following incident occurred in November 1941 and illustrates the point. It is not possible to vouch for the absolute accuracy of the details given by the English girl and her West Indian friend; but the matter was reported to the Welfare Officer and, as a result, an enquiry was conducted by the police superintendent and an apology conveyed to the parties concerned. Following the complaint, the Chief Constable issued a general instruction to all police regarding their relations with 'munitions workers' in the city.

An English girl reported:

'I met my friend at 8.15 on Tuesday night by the M . . . . Cinema, we went in with the intention of seeing the pictures. The girl in the cash desk told us that the big picture had started so it was up to ourselves whether we went in or not. I said, "No, we won't bother," so we came out.

'We started to walk past the M . . . . Picture House when we were stopped by a policeman. He asked my friend and myself for our identity cards. I didn't have mine but my friend had his. The policeman told me to stand in one place while he spoke to him; they were talking for about ten minutes, then he came to me and said, "Do you know that Nigger?" I said "Yes."

'*Policeman*: "Have you known him for a long time?" I said, "Yes, quite a long time, I met him through my girl friend."

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 108.

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*'Policeman:* "Does he work at the same place as you, and do you always see him while you are at work?" I said, "Yes he does work at the same place with me, but I don't always see him."

'He then asked me if my mother and father knew. I said "No." So he said, "What would you do if I went and told them." I said "If there is anybody to tell them it would be me to tell."

'He then took hold of me and went to my friend and told him to move on quickly in a very nasty sort of way. So my friend asked me where he was going to take me. He said, "To P . . . . Street about her Identity Card."

*'My Friend:* "But she is my lady friend and I am taking her out for the evening."

*'Policeman:* "You shut up you, and move on your way." He moved off.

'The policeman then said to me, "What have you in your handbag?" So I said, "Nothing very much."

*'Policeman:* "Come over here with me." We crossed the road. Once he said, "Follow me down this entry," so I did. It was a sort of complicated place. When we got there he looked in my handbag and took all my things out and placed them back. He asked again would you like me to tell your mother and I said, "Please, no." I was then very nervous and shaky. He put his arms around me and attempted to be affectionate. I was too frightened to say anything but I did not respond. After a long while he left me, saying not to move and went and brought two other policemen. They asked me the same questions about going out with a nigger and I gave the same replies. These two policemen went away and the original policeman handed me over to two policewomen. They took me to a place I thought was a police station, and after asking me a few questions they let me go. The policewomen treated me very decently.'

The West Indian reported:

'I was outside the M . . . . Cinema with a lady friend on the night of October 17th at about 7.30 p.m. We were walking towards C . . . . House. I heard a footstep behind me and a light was shone immediately on me. I heard someone say—"Your identification card." I looked around, saw a policeman and produced my card. He asked her for hers, but she hadn't it on her. The policeman then took me away from her—about ten yards—and he said to me, "Do you know that woman?" I answered, "She is my lady friend." He then asked me for her name and also the address of her residence. I told him. He left me and went towards her. He took her on one side of the road and spoke to her, I don't know what he said. I stood my ground for about half an hour. I saw the police walk away with my girl towards L . . . . Road. I turned to him and said, "That's my lady friend." He came back to me and said "Move on and keep moving." He then pushed me and said, "You black nigger, what right have you to be going with a white woman?" I walked towards the girl and told her that I would see her at work the next day. I went to my home at C . . . . Street, saw the warden and told him what had happened. He asked me whether I got the policeman's number because the policeman was wrong. I said I did not. The warden suggested that I should try and get it so that he could investigate. I then asked another Jamaican to



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accompany me to the spot. When we got there I saw three policemen and went up to one whom I recognised, asking to be given his number. He hurried to the sergeant (as the superior appeared to me to be) and said, "I had trouble with this nigger." My friend butted in, but the policeman refused to give his number. The sergeant then turned to me and asked what was the trouble. I explained it to him. The policeman turned to me and said, "Move on," and pushed me. The sergeant said to me, "When a policeman tells you to move you must move at once." I joined my friend and went to the police station to lodge a complaint. When we got there the man on duty told us to wait outside because they were busy. We waited for about half an hour, knocked at the door—saw the policeman, who said they were still busy—so we went home.'

### 6. CONFLICTS AND DISTURBANCES

Mention has already been made of the several incidents of racial fighting that occurred in dance halls towards the end of 1943 in which West Indians and white Americans were largely involved. During the period of the war the number of incidents of serious violence occurring between white and coloured people were relatively few and not on any large scale. Brawling between two or three people tended to occur if either or both parties had had too much intoxicating liquor, but none of these minor incidents ever developed into large-scale disturbances or riots.

There were also incidents between different coloured groups within the population. Tension appears to have been high at times between Colonials and Liverpool-born groups, and between West Indians and West Africans. There were also occasions when antagonisms between the Negro population and the Chinese arose. It has been suggested that these examples of intra-group conflict resulted from a displacement of aggression which would otherwise have been directed towards the white community. It is difficult to judge the extent to which this may be true; the precipitating cause of most outbreaks of violence appears to have been quarrels over women.

One serious incident occurred in October 1943 when a series of clashes between Chinese seamen and coloured workers and seamen arose. Several attacks and brawls occurred on the streets in the course of a few days and about a dozen men were seriously wounded and a number of arrests were made. Although the affairs caused a great deal of bad feeling, steps were taken by the Ministry of Labour and the Colonial Office welfare officers to bring leaders in the Chinese and Negro communities together to re-establish friendly relations. A meeting was held in the British Council House and a small committee was formed: arrangements were made to extend hospitality to Chinese men



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in a seamen's hostel, and this policy appears to have succeeded in its purpose of bringing the affair to an amicable conclusion.

*Disturbances in 1948.*<sup>1</sup> The most serious outbreak of conflict between coloured and white people occurred after the war in the August Bank Holiday of 1948. There is reason to believe that this period coincided with increases in the numbers of Colonials living in Liverpool and with the peak of unemployment, especially among coloured seamen. Nevertheless, the precipitating cause again seems to have been a combination of Bank Holiday drinking and quarrels over women. The origin of the disturbance is obscure and a number of explanations have been put forward, none of which seems entirely satisfactory. The incidents were spread over three nights of the holiday and resulted in a large number of arrests and injuries.

The first incident occurred on Saturday night, 31st July. An African seaman was charged with maliciously wounding two white men with a long knife; the fight which ensued appears to have drawn a considerable crowd of onlookers who gathered outside an Anglo-Indian café. The proprietor reported that between 10.30 and 10.45 p.m. there was a large crowd estimated to be about two or three hundred people on the opposite side of the road. A West African left the café and was set on by the crowd: bricks and stones were thrown at the windows and damage was caused to tables and chairs. Police were sent for but do not appear to have arrived for about half an hour. Café customers escaped by the rear of the café. The crowd moved off in the direction of a coloured seamen's hostel, about three hundred yards away; apparently they were following an African, who sought unsuccessfully to enter the hostel before he was arrested.

On the second night further trouble developed after 10 p.m. in the same area; this time it centred about the coloured seamen's hostel. There was a large crowd of two or three hundred people; bricks were thrown at the hostel and many windows broken. The inhabitants barricaded themselves in and, despite reports to the contrary, it seems that no one entered or left the hostel at this time. Police eventually arrived, forced an entrance to the hostel and arrested a number of the inhabitants.

<sup>1</sup> This report of the disturbances in 1948 is a composite account derived from newspaper reports of events and the court session, eye-witness descriptions and an official report made to the Colonial Office in London. The writer is grateful to the Area Officer of the Colonial Office Welfare Department for permission to examine this report, but the Colonial Office is in no way responsible for any of the information or comments presented here.

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On the third night, Monday, noisy scenes again occurred outside the hostel, but this time police were present in full force. The crowds were dispersed, but a group of young Englishmen made for a Colonial club in Upper Parliament Street: they were headed off by a larger number of Colonials and driven in the direction of the Cathedral. The Colonials returned to the club to find it surrounded by police on duty outside. Although the proprietor of the club had closed it down and returned home some time beforehand, entrance was gained by some of the Colonials and serious fighting broke out between the Colonials and the police. Some forty-five Colonials and one or two English were arrested that evening.

It seems clear that on the Monday night violence was used by the Colonials against the police, including bottles and stones which were thrown. But the police appear to have retaliated with a singular lack of discrimination, with the result that a number of men who had not been involved in the affair received unwarranted injuries and were arrested. Some men claim that the police entered their homes and that they were beaten up without justification. Police appear to have entered premises in search of particular men and cases of mistaken identity almost certainly arose. On the second and third nights police reinforcements were called in from other districts who were not familiar with the coloured population. Furthermore, arrests were made and men taken to the station in vans unaccompanied by the constable making the charge. The general impression appears to be that the police took action which they thought would bring the disturbances to a close as quickly as possible—which, in their view, meant removing the coloured minority, rather than attempting to arrest the body of irresponsible whites who were involved. In fact about sixty coloured men in all were arrested and about ten white.

The impression that the police tried to deal with the disturbances by taking the coloured men in custody is confirmed by one incident: two West African seamen left their ship and made their way to their hostel. Seeing that there was trouble going on they avoided the immediate vicinity of the hostel by going through back streets. They were chased by a group of white men and were subsequently found by a police sergeant, facing a hostile crowd of about twelve white men who were throwing stones and other missiles at the coloured men, who had no means of defence. The latter appear to have shouted 'down with the white man'. The natural course would have seemed to be to take the two coloured men into protective custody; instead they were arrested and charged



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with disorderly behaviour. The police sergeant was asked in cross-examination whether he had spoken to the white people about their behaviour. He said that he had not and agreed that they were at least equally guilty of offences. Nevertheless the men were found guilty and fined by the magistrate. This incident created a great deal of bad feeling among Colonials, who considered that this was a typical example of racial prejudice on the part of the police. This impression might have been justified had it not been for another incident which arose in the courts at a later date. In this case a white man was charged; it appears that the man was being stoned by a group of coloured men, who were arrested at the time. The man admitted he had had a good deal to drink before the incident, and he was fined a nominal sum. These two incidents confirm the impression that the police were afraid the affair was getting out of hand and arrested those whom they felt provided the least line of resistance. Unfortunately, it appears that on most occasions the white men involved took to their heels at the sight of the police, but the Colonials tended to remain to fight it out with the police themselves.

In the majority of cases, the charges made against the Colonials were sustained by the magistrates' court and short terms of imprisonment or small fines were imposed. In one or two cases the decisions were reversed on appeal, and a few were dismissed in the magistrates' court. The following is an eye-witness account of the proceedings at one magistrates' court on a day on which two of the West Indian technicians were being tried<sup>1</sup>:

### *Trial of Six Coloured Men in Magistrates' Court:*

'The six accused were tried in a group, the charges in each case being that they were "in possession of offensive weapons with intent to wound person or persons unknown to the Court".

'The Courtroom was crowded—chiefly because of the large number of defendants and police witnesses. The seats kept for more or less privileged spectators were packed by interested observers, mostly coloured gentlemen and officials. There were a great many more Press men than is usually seen in that court. The passages and stairs outside the courtroom were swarming with coloured men, a few coloured women, and several white women with babies and toddlers of many hues. The women were neat and clean, though too obviously trying to look "respectable"—in the favourite too tightly-fitting tailored suit and white satin blouse, crippling high-heeled court shoes,

<sup>1</sup> The writer wishes to thank Mrs. Betty Spice, one-time member of the research staff of the Department of Social Science, University of Liverpool, for permission to quote from this account, written by her following the hearing.



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untidy hair subdued by water and hairpins into precarious coiffures, and floury face powder emphasising the hint of blowsiness and a harassed, woe-begone expression.

'The men, both inside and outside the courtroom, varied enormously both in types of dress and in origin. They were of all ages—from boys of 15 to grey-haired citizens of 50 years' standing. All were quietly and neatly dressed but the "ritzy" type stood out here and there, marked by a loud tie or a long jacket. Only a very few seemed shabbily or poorly dressed though it was hard to judge in the confusion outside the courtroom. Certainly, of the sixty defendants only about three looked unkempt.

'On the other hand, the white people concerned in the case, i.e. those who were charged with an offence, were undersized, long-haired youths wearing dirty ragged clothes, and at least three out of the eight or ten charged appeared to be sub-normal. There were two or three white girls and a coloured girl charged with these youths, all of whom were young, dirty-looking and poorly clad. At first the general atmosphere of the court was one of easy-going officialdom—the policemen all wore fatherly, indulgent expressions, the coloured men stood in the public gallery awaiting their turn in the dock with a pathetic docility, and things went pleasantly enough.

'Although the charges were commonplace and the proceedings throughout concerned themselves solely with these, there seemed no doubt in anyone's mind that the issue was really the deeper one of the relations between coloured and white people in the south end. For example, just before the case began an announcement was made in the passages outside the courtroom that "all the *racial* cases would be tried in No. 1".

The four plain-clothes constables concerned in the arrest of the six men were called to give evidence one by one. With one exception they looked ordinary reasonable men, rather unintelligent and certainly uneasy while giving evidence. The exception was one who looked more like a retired pugilist than anything else.

'Material pieces of evidence were displayed—a whole gin bottle, an old trilby hat full of broken bottles (the glass was white and thick, more like milk bottles than beer bottles), a banister rail, a razor-blade knife (i.e. a wooden holder for old razor-blades), and a most magnificent brass-handled screw-driver complete with scabbard.

'The police case was rather thin and though they had all evidently been well-rehearsed, several slips were made and each constable was mauled in turn by the defending solicitor. Each witness persisted in his story that there was no violence during or before the arrests and "could not say" how the defendants had received injuries described in picturesque detail by the defence. The two chief mistakes made by the prosecution seemed to be, first, that all four constables gave identically inaccurate descriptions of the clothing worn by some of the defendants at the time of their arrest; and secondly, that while the policemen all stated that they were met by a rain of broken bottles and brickbats as they entered the door of the house in which the arrests were made, the charge of obstructing the police was not made.

'Notwithstanding a rather brusque manner which upset clients and magistrate alike, the defending solicitor's case was put together very well indeed.

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His clients were so convincing in the witness stand and so unshakeable in their evidence that the four policemen, experienced though they must be in giving evidence, were put to shame.

'All six men gave an excellent account of themselves in the witness stand. For all his roughness in Court, the defending solicitor must have had limitless patience and understanding in preparing these men for the Court. Each man had a plausible, watertight story to tell and told it well, complete with well-rehearsed little jokes which he would utter with the naïve certainty of approval of a child in a Sunday School play, aware of adoring parents' presence in the audience. Certain Runyonesque phrases and expressions—"I *told* her good night", "I went into the room belonging to *Mistress G*—", "the *last* (i.e. the top) floor"—had obviously been deliberately left in to add flavour to these well-drilled accounts.

'The demeanour of the defendants was almost perfect. Unlike the policemen, they were relaxed and at ease on the stand and all told their tales with a quiet confidence which the prosecution found difficult to shake. Only when an unfortunately worded sentence was being twisted or when a previous statement had to be repeated under pressure, or when the accuracy of a statement was questioned, did they show signs of distress. On these occasions, which were very few—maybe three or four at most—the defendants would seem to lose control of the volume of their voices, would talk too rapidly and would use more gesticulations than were necessary.

'There can be no doubt that these men were handled roughly by the police. Though the phrase "beaten-up" would seem too strong a one to be used in this case, violent treatment had been given. Although the arrests were made two weeks before, one defendant still had a badly swollen face, and one boy—a slight, rather delicate lad of 15—had a scar on the back of his head which we could see quite plainly from several yards away: a patch of fuzz, about the size of a half-crown, was missing from the back of his head, and there were several stitches in the scalp. To make matters worse for themselves, the police insisted that the men offered no resistance to arrest, but went quietly. Medical evidence was called and seemed sound. It was in close agreement with the coloured men's descriptions of the blows they received from the police.

'The defendants were cross-examined in the following order:

'(1) Came from Jamaica in February 1941 as a technician. Occupation is a lathe-turner and has worked in factories regularly since coming here. Now employed by engineering firm in Birkenhead. A well-dressed man, quiet, serious and intelligent. His "act" was best of the lot. He had made the screwdriver in question himself—a really lovely tool. He was well-spoken and had a good vocabulary.

'(2) 23 years old, a general labourer at a paper works. Came from W. Indies in 1944 with R.A.F. and was "demobbed" on 4th August 1948. He looked smart and handsome in a "zoot-suit", but quite moderate. Not quite so intelligent verbally as the first, but a good vocabulary and address. He used several service expressions, e.g. "proceeded" and "thence".

'(3) 31 years old. Married with three children. A dance-band leader by



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profession. Came from Jamaica in 1940 as a technician. He was quietly and nicely dressed and had the same confident bearing of the other technician, but more inclined to be outraged by the prosecution's questions. He answered questions intelligently and made his points well. He seemed to have difficulty in hearing what the prosecuting solicitor said and his polite "beg-pardons" infuriated the latter. It was a good technique because the sarcastic sting seemed taken out of most of the questions when they were repeated.

'(4) 25 years old. Also a musician—plays saxophone in community centre band. A very quiet gentleman, soberly clad in a dark brown overcoat. He had a soft voice and a naïve manner, but quick-witted enough to spot all the traps laid for him by the prosecution. He was also a West-Indian.

'(5) 30 years old (looked nearer 45). Single man from Freetown. "Decently" dressed, quiet, thoughtful, remote. Is studying geography. He spoke English with some difficulty. A strange looking man, obviously unconnected with the West Indians, except for living in the same lodgings.

'(6) 15 years old. Accompanied by "guardian", a very pretty young white woman. He looked rather frail. Clothes were of good quality and taste. He spoke rather hesitantly but quite clearly. He seemed intelligent and mature far beyond his age. He said in evidence that police searched him and then put a knife in his pocket, and to everyone's astonishment he suddenly produced this knife for us to see. He said also that he heard the sound of bottles being smashed and swept up when in detention. He pointed out the policeman who had knocked him about and this gentleman certainly became scarlet in the neck and rather shamefaced at this stage. The boy came from Jamaica quite recently, possibly as a stowaway.

'The whole case was characterised by a good deal of "hard swearing" on both sides. The slant of the defence was unaccountable interference by police in peaceful comings and goings of coloured men in general. Certainly they seemed, in some cases, to have arrested the wrong man.'

After the adjournment of this particular group of cases the deputy stipendiary said that he had considered the evidence carefully and was in doubt that the charge had been established. The men were acquitted.

Although the number of West Indian technicians and trainees involved in these disturbances was small there was a great deal of sympathy expressed by them towards all those who had been charged. Protest meetings were called in which the West Indians took a prominent part. A fund was raised to assist in meeting the cost of the defence which amounted to several hundreds of pounds. The solidarity of the coloured community in the face of a situation which they clearly regarded as a threat and an affront to their status was interesting. The Somali and Arab groups in the population had been singularly untouched by the violence, and, whether by coincidence or not, the cafés and other places run by them were not seriously affected. There was



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reason to believe, therefore, that they might try to preserve their good name by dissociating themselves altogether from the troubles. In fact, this did not happen, and all the coloured groups in the population appeared to have been closely identified in their resentment of the white behaviour at this time. One Somali was reported to have said, 'This is as much our business as the West Africans or anyone else. If it can happen to them it can happen to us.' It was reported that there was no obvious sign of increased tension between coloured and white in succeeding weeks at the offices of the Shipping Federation or at the Ministry of Labour. Whether this is true or not, the fact remains that West Indians and other coloured people in the south end of Liverpool remember the incidents with bitterness and claim that this was another confirmation of the basic hostility between English people (the police in particular) and the coloured community.

The attitude of white people, apart from those actually involved in the disturbances, appears to have varied. Some who were aware of the facts of the case were appalled at what they considered to be injustice against the coloured community. But people who knew no more than they had been able to read in the press appear to have been confirmed in their view of the coloured population as an unruly element, dangerous and hostile, which should be punished firmly and discouraged from coming to England and disturbing the peace. Such is the operation of the 'self-justifying prophecy'.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

THE report so far has dealt with various aspects of group relations. In this chapter attention will be paid to the individual adjustment of the West Indian to life in Britain. In order to do this it is necessary to have a means of measurement of adjustment, and a scale has been devised. The scale was based upon documentary records regarding the West Indians contained in the individual case files kept by the Welfare Officer. The five-point scale of adjustment was drawn up in the same way as the scale of skill and ability at work which has already been described.<sup>1</sup> It is unfortunate that there was no way in which comparisons could be made between the adjustment of West Indians and that of other workers in the factories. This would have necessitated some kind of control group which it was not possible to secure. The scale, therefore, is a relative one which enables comparisons to be made between one West Indian and another only. Having placed each man on the adjustment scale according to the documentary records available a more detailed investigation was made in the course of interviews with a number of men.<sup>2</sup> The men taken for more detailed study were selected at random and, whilst not representing in any way a statistically significant sample, they were a cross-section of those in the scheme. Ten very detailed case histories were made, two for each of the points on the adjustment scale. Unfortunately, limitation of space and the danger that the individuals concerned might be identified has prevented the publication of the full case studies.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1. THE SCALE OF ADJUSTMENT

The term *adjustment* here implies the acceptance by the individual

<sup>1</sup> Pages 11 and 32.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> In order that *bona fide* research students may have access to these detailed case studies a copy of the original manuscript has been deposited in the Countee Cullen Negro Collection in the Trevor Arnett Library of Atlanta University, U.S.A.

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

West Indian of the duties and responsibilities that were expected of him in his rôle as industrial employee. The term is therefore employed in a sociological rather than a psychological sense, although, of course, severe maladjustment may be exhibited by mental unbalance, where this interferes with the man's ability to fulfil his rôle as an employee. The Welfare Officer kept detailed records of every man in the scheme in which employment history and behaviour were recorded. These reports have been examined, and like the assessments of skill and ability, reduced for the purposes of this study to a five-point scale.<sup>1</sup> The distribution of these scores is shown in Diagram 3 and Tables 12 and 13. The following is a brief description of the characteristics typical of each category on the scale.

*Excellent adjustment.* In this category are included those who were regarded as 'the more outstanding men on the scheme'. These include those who assumed leadership rôles in the various factories and were regarded by the Welfare Officer and the management as being highly valued and reliable men. In a few cases such a man acted as an unofficial deputy for the Ministry Welfare Officer and settled disputes on the spot; sometimes he was a trade union shop steward and accepted alike by coloured and white workers. Others received promotion to foremen. Combined with these characteristics were a balanced outlook on life, ability to see all sides of a question, and satisfactory relationships in his out-of-factory life which helped to maintain his adjustment. It will be appreciated that not all those included had outstanding records but all received some special mention for their good behaviour and positive contribution to the scheme.

It will be seen that 23 per cent of technicians and 6 per cent of trainees have been included in this category of excellent adjustment.

*Good adjustment.* In this category are included all those men who, whilst not taking on leadership rôles, were very satisfactory and reliable employees. Such men had a good record of attendance and timekeeping and often received praise from the management; in some cases promotion was made to chargehand and such men were frequently active in trade union and recreational activities in the factory. Often they pursued private studies in their spare time and were usually well liked by their fellow workers both coloured and white. In this category fell 38 per cent of the technicians and 33 per cent of the trainees.

*Average adjustment.* In this category are included those who, whilst not being noted for any particular vices, did not make any special

<sup>1</sup> See footnote, page 32.



## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

impression. The record showed occasional disciplinary actions for small offences of timekeeping or for absenteeism or disobeying orders. Among this group were those whom the Welfare Officer considered were somewhat weak in character and tended to be influenced by the company they kept. Some pursued private study, but often had not the power of concentration to enable them to maintain such studies for any length of time. Personalities were often likeable enough, but easily provoked into aggressiveness or sulkiness if the man could not have his own way. In this category fell 25 per cent of the technicians and 36 per cent of the trainees.

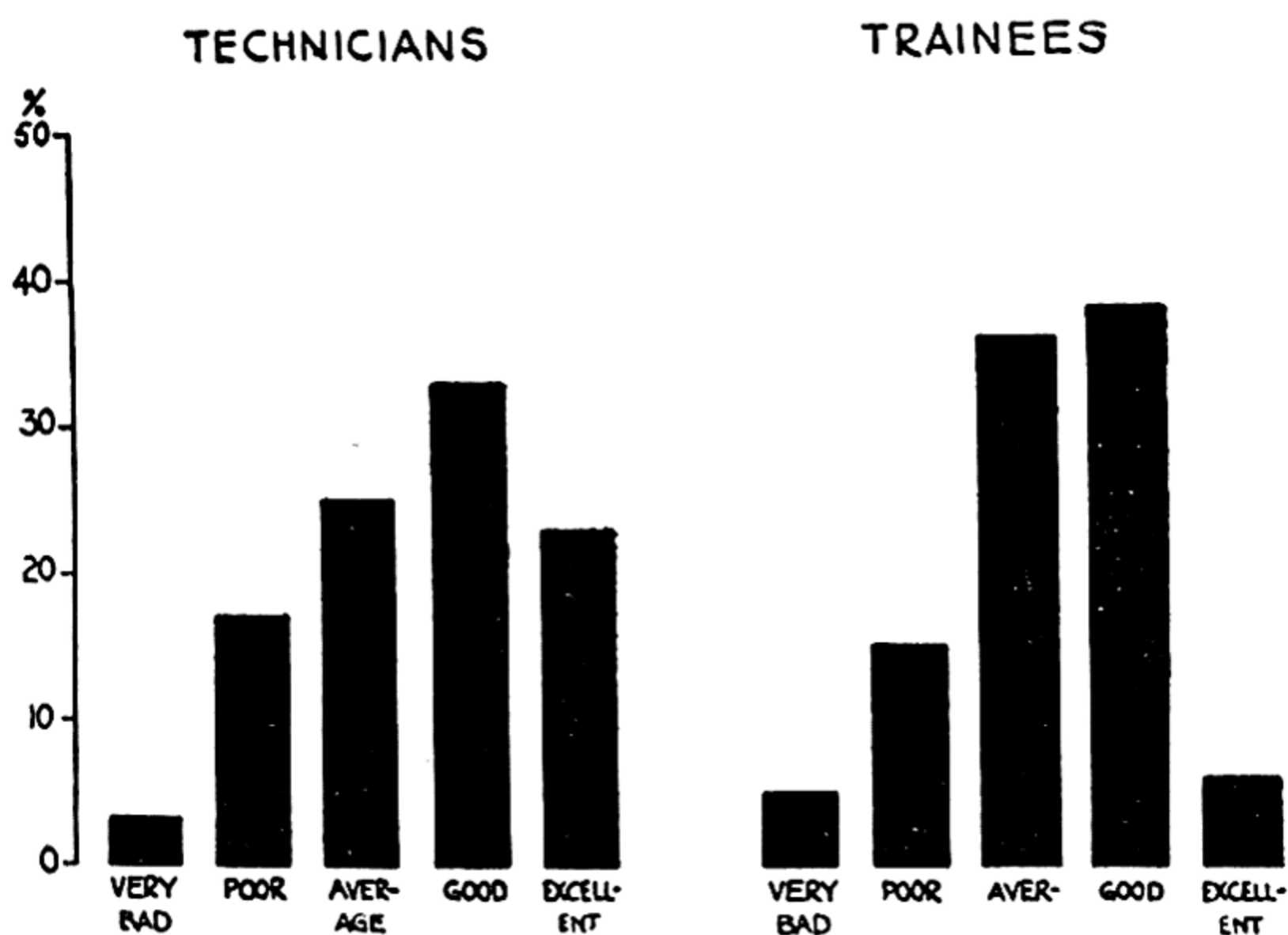


DIAGRAM 3. DISTRIBUTION OF ADJUSTMENT RATINGS

*Poor adjustment.* Into this category fall all those whose adjustment was markedly poor, but not so severe that they had to be discharged from the scheme. Timekeeping and absenteeism records were bad and frequent changes of employment usual. Such men were a source of constant complaint from the management and were not liked by the majority of their fellow workers. Perhaps the best description of this type or poorly adjusted worker has been given by McMurry<sup>1</sup>; 'Typical examples are the eccentric; the unstable; the anti-social; the stupid; the disciplinary problems (the insubordinate, the alcoholics, etc.); the

<sup>1</sup> McMurry, R. N., *Handling Personality Adjustment in Industry* (Harper, New York, 1944).

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

defensive and the suspicious; the day dreamers; the chronic absentees; and the accident prone.' In this category fell 17 per cent of the technicians and 15 per cent of the trainees.

TABLE 12

### *Adjustment of Jamaican Technicians*

<i>Contingent</i>	<i>Excellent</i>		<i>Good</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Poor</i>		<i>Very Bad</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1	8	16	19	37	14	27	10	20	—	—	51	100
2	16	28	13	22	16	28	10	17	3	5	58	100
3	17	24	27	38	15	21	10	14	2	3	71	100
All Technicians	41	23	59	33	45	25	30	17	5	3	180*	100

\* Eight cases unclassified.

TABLE 13

### *Adjustment of West Indian Trainees*

<i>Contingent and Colony</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very Bad</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
4 Honduras	—	8	4	2	—	14
5 Jamaica	—	1	1	—	—	2
6 Bahamas	3	4	3	4	—	14
7 Jamaica	1	17	17	3	2	40
8 Barbados	2	3	1	1	1	8
9 Guiana	—	6	7	4	2	19
10 Leeward	1	3	9	4	2	19
11 Windwards	1	7	4	1	—	13
All Trainees	8 (6%)	49 (38%)	46 (36%)	19 (15%)	7 (5%)	129* (100%)

\* Twenty-eight cases unclassified.

*Very bad adjustment.* In this category fell 3 per cent of the technicians and 5 per cent of the trainees, making a total of twelve cases. Of these, two committed suicide, four were severely unbalanced mentally and

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

received hospital treatment, three had serious police records and three contracted acute venereal disease which, combined with their bad record of behaviour, required their discharge from the scheme.

### 2. THE PROCESS OF ADJUSTMENT

The distribution of adjustment scores shown in Diagram 3 makes it clear that the frequently expressed view that the West Indians were a burden on society and more nuisance than they were worth cannot be substantiated. There were, undoubtedly, a few who were responsible for violent anti-social behaviour. Several men were responsible for administering knife wounds either to other Colonials (in one case a West African) and, in one or two instances, to white people. These assaults usually took place under the influence of drink and as a result of some provocation in the form of an insult often pertaining to the man's colour. Despite these incidents it is not possible to substantiate the claim that the West Indians were unduly given to violence or crime of any kind. Any form of theft or larceny appears to have been comparatively rare and there can be little doubt that in some cases coloured men are charged with offences in circumstances in which a white person would be ignored. The policy of 'keep moving' pursued by the police to combat loitering is much resented by coloured people who want to congregate on the street corner for a chat. When ordered to move on in such circumstances the reaction is sometimes interpreted by the police as insolence or obstruction and charges of disorderly behaviour often arise in this way, which have a minimum of foundation. One incident was brought to the writer's notice in which a West Indian was knocked down by a car and slightly bruised. The car pulled up and the coloured man remonstrated with the driver for his carelessness. At this point a policeman appeared and, thinking that the coloured man was being a nuisance, ordered him off and told the driver to go on. Following protests the coloured man was then charged with disorderly behaviour. Fortunately, two (white) witnesses came forward and the case was dismissed.

Among the more positive aspects of the men's behaviour two deserve special mention. These are the intense interest taken by a large proportion of the men in sport and in further education. The West Indian's prowess as a cricketer is well known and among the technicians and trainees were a number who played an excellent game. The Welfare Officer himself captained a team at Lord's on several occasions in which a number of the West Indian volunteer workers played. Other teams



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were formed which toured the north of England, playing at week-ends. Other sports were also played. Some played tennis, and football and darts teams were, and still are, popular. General athletics were not ignored and there was at least one Olympic champion—a Jamaican who held titles for weight-lifting.

It is well known that colonial peoples look to England as a place where it is possible to further their education and training, which are felt to be the passports to advancement in our society. It is remarkable the passion with which further educational activities were pursued by many of the men. Some fell by the wayside, finding either that they just did not have the ability, or that spare-time studies were too much in addition to a hard day's work. But many did in fact pursue correspondence courses, or study at evening institutes and the like; many are still doing so today. Some took further training in their own trades. Others took up more academic studies; these ranged from courses in literature, French and other languages, music and theology, to economics, statistics, agriculture, dentistry and other practical subjects such as sanitary engineering. Some succeeded in obtaining certificates and other qualifications as a result of their part-time study. Short courses in foremanship, which were organised at Manchester and Liverpool technical colleges by the Ministry of Labour, were taken by over one hundred of the men, many of whom passed with honours.

*Seeking acceptance.* An important factor, which is of help in understanding the contributory causes of adjustment and maladjustment among the West Indians, is to be found by examining the initial attitudes of the West Indians towards England and their reasons for coming. The motives which led to the West Indians to leave their own country were mixed; in some cases there was a craving for adventure, in others a desire to escape from difficulties and conflicts in their personal lives, often connected with family matters. In some cases there was a genuine patriotism and a desire to help the 'mother country'. For most of the immigrants there were several motives combined together; but in almost all cases the overriding and all-important incentive seems to have been an economic one. Unemployment and low wages at home cause many men every year to leave the West Indies in search of work. The majority go to America because it is easier to get there and the demand is greater. But those who come to England are no less attracted by the opportunity of employment and wages at a level they could not possibly hope to earn at home.

To the inhabitants of the British West Indies, England is the 'mother

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country'.<sup>1</sup> It means to them all that such a figure of speech would imply. England is the symbol of the benevolent protecting parent, the source of gratification and love. Such an attitude persists, despite the increased nationalism in the Colony, which may, perhaps, be understood as an aspect of the ambivalent attitudes existing between children and parents. This attitude has been perpetuated and to some extent encouraged by the Churches. Missionaries in the Colonies tend to paint a picture of life in England which leads the West Indian to think of England as a demi-paradise where all men and women exhibit the Christian virtues he has had so laboriously instilled in him. It is little exaggeration to say that he comes to England expecting that he will be received at once with a welcome, be given a job at a high rate of pay, and be able to live the kind of life that English people normally live in the Colonies. In fact, for the first twenty-four hours in Britain the first contingent of Jamaicans must have thought that their wishful thinking was to be fulfilled. Civic welcomes were arranged for them at the Scottish port at which they landed, with a banquet and speeches.<sup>2</sup> The procedure was repeated when the party reached Liverpool. Needless to say, disillusionment soon set in.

Nevertheless, the behaviour of the West Indian can only be understood in the light of their desire for acceptance in, and membership of, the whole pattern of primary and secondary groups that constitute English society. The feeling of conflict and uncertainty that arose when they first began to experience rejection is comparable to the dilemma facing the American Negro, to which Myrdal has drawn attention. Herskovits, also, has suggested that the contradictions between ideals and reality in American society 'at best produce a tortured cynicism, and at worst the psychoses that result from the frustrations the individual has experienced'.<sup>3</sup> Among the West Indians in Liverpool the pattern is repeated. Cynicism appears to be almost universal among Negroes in the city; and examples can be cited of psychotic individuals whose behaviour is clearly conditioned by the conflicts they have experienced through racial prejudices in this country.

The behaviour of the West Indian Negro in Liverpool may be best understood in terms of his attempt to escape from the isolation that

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the reference to the tenacious way in which the British West Indian insists upon his British citizenship when in America. Simey, T. S., *Welfare and Planning in the West Indies*, p. 77 (Clarendon Press, 1948).

<sup>2</sup> One West Indian remarked that the one and only good meal he had eaten in Britain was that first civic dinner!

<sup>3</sup> Herskovits, M. J., *Man and His Works*, p. 44 (Knopf, New York, 1948).



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segregation and prejudice create, and to participate more actively in the social life of the people about him. Yet, in this attempt to break through the barriers that have been established between white and Negro he becomes most aware of the social distance separating the two groups. The more he attempts to break down the barriers the more frustration he experiences and the more anxiety about his status and security he feels. Frustration and anxiety in their turn tend to create a great deal of conscious or unconscious aggression which sometimes earns the Negro a reputation for undue truculence.

### *Channelling Aggression : Illustrative Types*

Previous studies<sup>1</sup> of Negro personality have shown that a valuable approach to an understanding of Negro behaviour should be based upon an examination of the ways in which aggression is channelled and directed by the cultural process. A similar analysis of the case histories of the West Indian Negroes in England suggests that there are four main patterns of adjustment that can be observed. Naturally, no one individual will necessarily fall exactly into any one of these categories. They are rather 'ideal types' which are useful for classification. They are put forward, at present, mainly as hypotheses which warrant more intensive research by an investigator possessing psychiatric training.

There is, first of all, the balanced integrated personality, that is to say a Negro who has succeeded in making a good adjustment to life in England and has achieved a satisfactory integration of his personality. Such a man will not be unaware of the frustrations and tensions which Negroes experience, but he will be able to face up to such conflicts, precisely because he has succeeded in achieving, for himself, a measure of status and security. He is less bound by the personal anxiety and inner conflicts which besiege so many of his fellows. He will be able to experience insults without exhibiting disproportionate resentment and aggressiveness, because he had some insight into the causes of such attitudes on the part of others. Often he will consciously respond to disparaging remarks by reasoning, and will try to explain to the person involved the irrationality of his action. Having a measure of self-confidence and inner security, colour prejudice is not a constant source

<sup>1</sup> For example: Dollard, J., *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, Simey T. S., *op. cit.*; Hadley, C. V. D., 'Personality Patterns and Aggression in the British West Indies', *Human Relations* (1949), pp. 348-62; Powdermaker, H., 'Channelling Negro Aggression by the Cultural Process', *American Journal of Sociology*, 48, pp. 750-8, 1943.



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of anxiety. More often than not, success in establishing good family relationships is an important contributory factor in creating this type of successful adjustment.

Case C. D. illustrates a balanced, well-integrated personality and good behavioural adjustment. C. D. is one of the Jamaican technicians who came to Britain in 1941 and has remained until the present day. He is a machine tool setter graded as a semi-skilled worker whose ability and general adjustment were both rated as good on the five-point scale. He has a record of continuous employment at one firm since his arrival and is now an established industrial civil servant. He is reported to be a competent workman and a regular attender at his employment. During the war his average earnings were £8, but declined when overtime was no longer available. He himself likes his work at the factory and has no desire to move; he regards himself as one of the lucky ones and recognises that other West Indians have had difficulties about getting work. He is a trade union member, but has not taken any active part in union organisation. His behavioural record is good both in the factory and in the community at large.

C. D. was unmarried when he came to England and made the acquaintance at the factory of the girl who is now his wife. She introduced him to her own family, where he was at once well received and liked. He was always at liberty to call there and the house became a familiar rendezvous for many of the West Indians, who welcomed an opportunity for acceptance in an ordinary working-class home. Since they have had the children C. D.'s mother-in-law frequently visits them and sometimes stays for long periods. There appear to be very friendly relations between all the members of the family. The elder boy is a lively child, mischievous and probably somewhat spoiled. His mother says she 'does not know what the teachers will do with him when he starts school'. The second child appears to be a little less robust and is a source of concern to the parents.

C. D. has always taken an active part in social life in Britain. He has been a member of various clubs at the factory and was a regular attender at dances before he was married. He says that he has rarely experienced the colour bar himself, although he knows others who have. He knows of public-houses where they only serve Negroes in the public bar, but there are other smart hotels where he has been completely accepted. He admits that sometimes people make nasty remarks on the street, but he is usually too busy thinking about other things to make a fuss about it. He says that he is always welcome at the local (white) community centre but he does not go there often, nor to the coloured community centre in the south end of the town. He says that he gets on very well with all the people, coloured and white, in his neighbourhood. He feels that the solution to the colour problem must be found by the white man and not the coloured.

C. D. is a friendly, likeable person, and an easy conversationalist. He is not in any way obsessional about the colour problem and it does not bother him unduly. He is happily married and very fond of his children. A steady worker, with a number of other coloured friends with whom he spends his leisure time, he is relatively content. He is learning music and French at the

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evening institute for his own amusement. 'I might take a holiday in France some time.'

C. D. has made a good adjustment to conditions in Britain. He has fulfilled the rôles of industrial worker and of family man with success and has settled contentedly to life in Britain. He admits suffering no serious consequences of colour prejudice since he has been here, but he is still closely identified with other coloured people and quick to defend their interests. Although regularly employed and living in a predominantly white neighbourhood, C. D. still chooses most of his friends from among other coloured people and goes to a Negro private club to play in a coloured dance band. Thus, although probably assimilated to a higher degree than most of the West Indians who came over under the scheme, he is still not completely integrated into the main white community in which he is living. This, however, has not prevented him from making a good personality and behavioural adjustment.

In complete contrast to the 'balanced and integrated personality' is the 'overtly aggressive'. Such a person will be acutely colour conscious. He will be constantly on the look-out for actions which he believes are motivated by prejudices towards him because of his colour. He will go out of his way to pick an argument with anyone, especially a white person, about the discrimination from which coloured people in general, and he in particular, are made to suffer. He will show signs of strong emotional involvement in such arguments and be quite incapable of reasoning about the subject. If he believes himself insulted or discriminated against, he will adopt a threatening attitude, and sometimes actually indulge in physical reprisal against the person deemed responsible. His whole personality will bear the marks of anxiety and insecurity which will be reflected in a restless disposition. He will rarely hold a job for long without having a severe quarrel with manager, foreman or other workers which usually end in his dismissal. This will only intensify his feeling of frustration and deprivation and confirm him in his own belief that the hand of every white man is against him. Sometimes his aggressive disposition will be generalised and his hostility also directed against members of his own family and other coloured people, as well as against all forms of authority, leading to criminal behaviour.

I. J. is an example of an overtly aggressive type. He came to Britain in 1941 passing himself off as a skilled worker, although in actual fact it was obvious on arrival that he possessed no skill in his trade at all. Both his skill and adjustment ratings were very poor. He was ejected from a government hostel soon after arrival for bad behaviour, including drunkenness and for attempting to introduce women into the hostel. From then onwards he lived in private lodgings, usually leaving when he owed a great deal of rent.



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Within the first twelve months of arrival in this country, I. J. had worked for ten different firms, eventually being dismissed from them all. He left the first firm after taking a vehicle across the river where it broke down. He had no permission to use the car and it was not licensed for ordinary usage. He was dismissed from the second firm for using the firm's time to mend his bicycle. At the third firm he was found to be a bad timekeeper and wholly unreliable, and was dismissed from the fourth, fifth and sixth firms for the same reason. He then worked for a ship-building firm and himself applied for release which was readily given. The last two firms discharged him from their service because of his bad conduct and for being involved in physical assaults upon other employees. He was ejected from the government hostel for bad conduct and appeared from time to time before the police court on various charges including 'disorderly behaviour', 'riding a bicycle while under the influence of alcohol', 'receiving stolen property', 'shooting with intent to murder', etc. He has served various terms of imprisonment and is believed to have been concerned recently with several kinds of anti-social activity, such as the sale of drugs and the running of brothels.

There can be little doubt that the foundation of I. J.'s aggressive character was laid before he came to Britain and that neither colour prejudice nor discrimination can be altogether blamed for his dissolute life.

A third personality type can be observed which is similar to that which Dollard has described as the 'good nigger'. He too will show symptoms of anxiety and insecurity; but these will not take the form of overt aggressiveness. Such behaviour, one man told the writer, 'get the Negro nowhere'. This type of Negro tends to suppress his aggressive impulses, very often claiming that Christ demands that he should humbly accept these insults. 'My reward will come in the next life.' 'It is no good returning hard words or blows for rebuffs and insults.' 'The Negro must turn the other cheek, as Christ commanded him.' These are typical remarks made by the type of West Indian Negro who has succeeded in suppressing his aggression. The hostility which would otherwise be expressed against the white man is internalised and rationalised, very often under the influence of religious convictions. In a mild form such a person may make a good adjustment, but if the repressed aggression leads to a complete divorce from reality, pathological symptoms of mental unbalance may result as in the case of S. T.

S. T. is one of the West Indian trainees who came to Britain late in 1942. He was sent to a Government Training Centre, but failed to acquire proper skill and his ability was rated as very poor. His adjustment also has been very poor and his behaviour suggests that he must be regarded as a borderline psychotic. He refuses to accept work either as a labourer or in the trade for which he has had some training, but insists that he wants a job as a 'welfare officer' or in some similar capacity. He assiduously reads on subjects such as



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law, politics, economics, and theology and frequently poses as a *bona fide* student, while actually being dependent upon National Assistance. He is constantly in debt and even refuses to stamp his letters! Although he has occasional outbursts of violence he usually suppresses his overtly aggressive tendencies and instead makes long speeches at the slightest provocation, containing long and irrelevant quotations from the Bible, and includes a 'manifesto or bill of rights for coloured people' addressed to the Sovereign. He was a regular attender at a coloured mission until he began to develop feelings of persecution there. He is not unintelligent, but his pose as a student and his religious mania, are part of his complete failure to adjust to the reality of his own situation. Successful adjustment could only take place with psychiatric treatment, which he refuses.

The fourth personality type which can sometimes be observed among the West Indians in England is the one where the aggressive impulses have been 'sublimated' or channelled into a leadership rôle. Such a person shares many of the characteristics of the overtly aggressive type of West Indian, but often possesses a higher intelligence. He succeeds in maintaining a better internal adjustment of his personality, but directing his aggression into a rôle which enables him, symbolically, to take up the cudgels on the part of coloured people, without contravening the taboo on physical violence. Often he will become a trade union leader, or be active in welfare activities on behalf of the coloured population. He will be sensitive to discrimination and anxious to fight individual cases with the authorities. He gains considerable status from the fact that other coloured people look up to him, respect him and seek his help when they are in difficulty. Sometimes, of course, he draws a certain amount of jealousy from other coloured people as well. In general, such a person succeeds in achieving a successful integration of inner conflicts and tensions, by channelling his aggressiveness into a crusade for the improvement of the position of coloured people in society. A. B. is typical of this kind of adjustment.

A. B. is a Jamaican technician who came to Britain in 1941, having completed his apprenticeship and worked for several years as a tool and gauge maker. He is a skilled worker whose ability and general adjustment were both rated as excellent. He worked for one firm all through the war and since then has held several other posts. He had personal experiences of discrimination in his search for employment which he resented, as his own qualifications were superior to those of the white men appointed. From an early age he had assumed leadership rôles of different types. In Jamaica he used to work voluntarily in a Y.M.C.A. club and on the ship coming over was elected spokesman for his fellow Jamaicans, replying to speeches of welcome on arrival. At his first factory he joined the trade union and later held various offices in the local branch and acted as unofficial deputy for the Ministry Welfare Officer,

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if any difficulties arose in the latter's absence. He has also devoted a great deal of his spare time to voluntary help at the coloured community centre, serving on committees, etc.

He has married an English girl although this meant her complete estrangement from her own family. Both appear to have made a satisfactory adjustment, although they have continued to live in a house shared with a number of other West Indians.

A. B. is extremely colour conscious and labours under a sense of discrimination both against him personally and against coloured people in general. He is quick to take offence and to assume that a derogatory remark or action of deprivation has been directed towards him, because of his colour. He strongly dislikes the use of the term 'nigger', even in such phrases as 'to work like a nigger', and is quick to take up anybody who uses the phrase. He is somewhat contemptuous of the ignorance shown by English people about the Colonies and is proud of his own wide general knowledge and fluency of speech.

In terms of his fulfilment of the rôles expected of him in the community and in the factory A. B.'s adjustment to life in England has been excellent. In his personality he betrays tendencies which, if analysed more closely, would probably reveal underlying conflicts and neurotic traits which would suggest that the achievement of these rôles has not been without some detrimental effects upon his personality integration. But in sociological terms A. B. has proved himself one of the more outstanding members of the 'scheme', and has received the praise of all those concerned with its organisation. The Ministry of Labour report on his conduct claims that he has been a very reliable person, a good ambassador for his country, and a valuable liaison between the Welfare Department and the men.

It seems clear that the aggressive tendencies in A. B.'s personality, arising out of his strong colour consciousness and sense of discrimination, have been channelled into the leadership rôle that he has adopted. He has been able to gain a sense of status and personal security as a result of the privileges derived from his position of trust and the self-esteem, encouraged by his high industrial skill and popularity as a leader.

### *Is the Negro in England a 'Marginal Man'?*

Since R. E. Park first coined the term 'marginal man' the concept has received a variety of interpretations by different writers. In its broadest sense, the term has been used to describe the position of any person or group whose rôle and status in society is ill-defined and who, therefore, experiences insecurity and rejection at the hands of the majority.<sup>1</sup> Narrower definitions have limited the concept to those situations where the individual falls between the membership of two major social groupings and is fully accepted by neither—the position of the non-orthodox Jew being a case in point. The 'marginal man' concept can also be fruitfully applied to those situations where the individual

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hughes, E. C., 'Social Change and Status Protest', *Phylon*, 10, pp. 58–65, 1949.



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is fully accepted by the members of his own cultural group, but where he aspires for acceptance in another group, who are prejudiced, and discriminate against him.

It is the latter sense in which the 'marginal man' concept could be applied to an analysis of the West Indian Negro in English society. There is no question in England of the Negro, whether light or dark skinned, experiencing rejection by the coloured community. The coloured man can, if he wishes, achieve a good adjustment in his personal life by withdrawing into the coloured community and seeking all outlet for his social impulses among other coloured people. In practice this only happens in rare cases and usually represents an accommodation pattern that is a result of an inability to face the anxieties created by any attempt to gain acceptance in the white community. As has been pointed out the West Indians with whom this study is concerned, in common with almost all the coloured community in England, very much desire to be accepted fully by the white population as British subjects, with all the privileges that such status implies.

As has already been suggested, West Indian Negroes in England often compare the situation in certain parts of the United States with that prevailing in Britain. Many have said that from their personal point of view they would prefer a situation in which the 'colour bar' was clearly defined, rather than vague and unpredictable in its operation, as in England. The attitude is summed up in the following typical comment:

'In America you know where you stand; in England the people say they have no prejudice or colour bar, but in practice we know that it is there. But because it is not out in the open we cannot fight it. In America you can either avoid trouble, or you know where to go, and what to do, if you want to fight against it.'

The ambiguity of the racial situation in England is therefore a source of anxiety to the Negro, and this in its turn produces inevitable personal maladjustment. This varies in degree from a slight feeling of uneasiness and not quite 'belonging' to more serious symptoms of mental breakdown, which in two cases led to suicide. One man jumped from a high window and another died of coal-gas poisoning.<sup>1</sup>

There are three main fields in which the search for status and security expresses itself: the economic, the social and the sexual. At the end of

<sup>1</sup> Both men were members of the contingent from the Windward Islands. In the former case a diary kept by the man showed definite fits of depression. In both cases the coroner's verdict was 'suicide while the balance of the mind was disturbed'.



## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

the war, when unemployment began to appear, the West Indian Negro workers began to show signs of severe anxiety about their jobs. At other times they have shown serious concern about wage rates, especially if there is the slightest suspicion that they may be asked to accept lower rates than they are entitled to, or than white workers receive for the same work. In the wider social sphere their resentment of colour prejudice, discrimination and colour bar reflect the natural reaction to a feeling of rejection and deprivation in the community. Finally, the desire to be accepted as sex partners, despite the resentment attached to mixed marriages, is enhanced by the high value, already referred to, which the West Indian in particular places upon 'marrying light'. It is

TABLE 14  
*Technicians and Trainees*  
*Marital Status and Adjustment*

Marital Status	Adjustment											
	Excellent		Good		Average		Poor		Very Bad		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	23	16	43	30	43	30	27	19	9	6	145	100
Married in B.W.I.	13	19	27	39	22	31	8	11	—	—	70	100
Married in U.K.	7	13	21	38	18	33	6	11	3	6	55	100
Married twice	1	—	7	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	10	—
No information	5	—	10	—	7	—	7	—	—	—	29	—
Total	49	16	108	35	91	29	49	16	12	4	309*	100

\* Thirty-six cases unclassified.

significant that few, if any, of the West Indians have married Liverpool-born coloured girls. The parents of these girls tend to be equally anxious that their daughters should, if possible, marry a white man, and do not seem to encourage their association with dark West Indians.

The relationship between marital status and adjustment has been examined statistically although the reliability of the results cannot be taken for granted owing to the somewhat uncertain nature of the information regarding marital status. But on the basis of the figures in Table 14, it does appear that a high percentage of single males were of poor or very bad adjustment, compared with all married men, even if

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

the category of 'no information' (which also has a high proportion of maladjusted) is counted as married ( $P: < .05$ ). From these data, at any rate, there does not appear to be any significant difference in adjustment between men married in the West Indies and those married in the U.K. It must be remembered, however, that many of the single men were sexually experienced before leaving home and would have more difficulty in finding normal sexual expression in Britain.

One result of the anxiety about status and acceptance in English society has been an intensification of in-group feelings among the coloured population. This became especially acute after the disturbances between coloured and white people which occurred in Liverpool in 1948. Then, and often at other times, there was a feeling that 'coloured people must stick together against the prejudice of the whites'. It may well be true that the increased solidarity and group consciousness among coloured people in England is a necessary alternative to more serious personality disintegration among individuals. Park<sup>1</sup> has suggested that unless cultural conflicts express themselves in some kind of mass movement they may result in family disorganisation, delinquency and other pathological symptoms, all of which are present to some degree among coloured populations in England.

Often the explanation 'colour prejudice' provides a useful escape for the individual who does not want to face up to his shortcomings and failings. MacCrone<sup>2</sup> has pointed out that among educated Africans there are some who would be very loath to abandon their 'Boer-phobia' since it provided them with a satisfactory vehicle for expressing their own hostility and aggression. A similar state of mind appears to exist among many West Indians and other coloured people in Liverpool; the fanatical hostility that some of them express towards the white man appears to provide a release for inner conflicts which otherwise might prove insoluble.

One important manifestation of the status anxiety of the West Indian Negro in England is his preoccupation with class distinctions. The skilled man whose education and training is relatively high resents the fact that white prejudice against Negroes in general forces him into association with other coloured people whom he considers to be socially his inferiors. Such a person seeks every opportunity to find housing accommodation away from the area in which the majority of coloured

<sup>1</sup> Park, R. E., *Race and Culture*, p. 369 (The Free Press, Illinois, 1950).

<sup>2</sup> MacCrone, I. D., 'Reaction to Domination in a Colour Class Society', *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 26, p. 91, 1947.

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

people live in any particular city. His feelings are only aggravated when he realises that finding accommodation whether in lodgings, in houses, or apartments, outside this area is extremely difficult for a coloured man. The less skilled and educated West Indians, in their turn, complain of the snobbish attitudes of the others, who, they point out, are coloured like themselves and suffer the same indignities at the hands of white people.

### 3. RELATION BETWEEN SKILL AND ADJUSTMENT

Perhaps the most interesting example of the way in which status factors contributed to individual adjustment is found in an examination of the relationship between the skill and ability of the man at his work, and his general behavioural adjustment. Skill is an important manifestation of status in industry, the possession of which gives a feeling of security and self-respect as well as increasing prestige in the eyes of others. A man who can demonstrate his workmanship earns the genuine admiration of other men, both coloured and white alike. Even if white workers tend to be doubtful and suspicious of Negroes, they cannot help acknowledging good work and skill when they see it. The security and status that this gives to a coloured man contributes greatly to his successful adjustment, in the face of feelings of anxiety and rejection otherwise liable to result from his experiences of colour prejudice in other walks of life. In contrast the less skilled man is liable to have a sense of inferiority in his work which further aggravates the sense of isolation and insecurity resulting from his colour consciousness.

In Tables 15 and 16 the relation between the scores of adjustment and the score of skill are set out for technicians and trainees respectively. There is clearly a close association between them. The relationships are even more obvious in Table 17 where the scores are grouped. Among technicians there are 71 per cent like assessments, and 81 per cent among trainees.

The association between these two assessments is in fact so remarkable that one is led to doubt the validity of the data. Heim<sup>1</sup> has pointed out the difficulties involved in the attempt to assess factors such as behaviour and skill, and the danger of 'halo' effects where the knowledge of one characteristic may influence the assessments of the other. In the light of this danger the relationship between skill and adjustment has been explored by a second procedure, using the measure of skill derived

<sup>1</sup> Heim, A. W., 'Industrial Assessments', *Occupational Psychology*, Vol. XX, No. 1, June 1946.



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TABLE 15

## *Skill and Adjustment Technicians*

<i>Skill and Ability</i>	<i>Adjustment</i>											
	<i>Excellent</i>		<i>Good</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Poor</i>		<i>Very Bad</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Very Skilled	24	67	7	19	3	8	2	6	—	—	36	100
Good	17	18	43	46	27	29	6	6	—	—	93	100
Average	—	—	9	24	13	35	13	35	2	5	37	100
Poor	—	—	—	—	2	—	6	—	—	—	8	—
Very Bad	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	3	—	6	—
<i>Total</i>	41	23	59	33	45	25	30	17	5	3	180*	100

\* Eight cases unclassified.

TABLE 16

## *Skill and Adjustment Trainees*

<i>Skill and Ability</i>	<i>Adjustment</i>											
	<i>Excellent</i>		<i>Good</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Poor</i>		<i>Very Bad</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Very Skilled	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—
Good	3	7	31	67	11	24	—	—	1	2	46	100
Average	1	1	18	26	33	48	15	22	2	3	69	100
Poor	—	—	—	—	2	—	4	—	1	—	7	—
Very Bad	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	3	—
<i>Total</i>	8	6	49	38	46	36	19	15	7	5	129*	100

\* Twenty-eight cases unclassified.

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

from the classification of occupations. This assessemnt of skill status is completely independent of the five-point scale derived from the Welfare Officer's reports. It has already been pointed out in Chapter III that the skill status classification obtained from occupations cannot be considered quite such a direct measure of skill, but is useful enough for the present purpose. The relation between occupational status and

TABLE 17  
*Skill and Adjustment*  
(Grouped Score)

<i>Technicians</i>					<i>Trainees</i>				
<i>Skill</i>	<i>Adjustment</i>			<i>Total</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Adjustment</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Excel- lent</i>	<i>Good/ Aver- age</i>	<i>Poor/ Bad</i>			<i>Excel- lent</i>	<i>Good/ Aver- age</i>	<i>Poor/ Bad</i>	
Very Skilled	24	10	2	36	Very Skilled	4	—	—	4
Good and Average	17	92	21	130	Good and average	4	93	18	115
Poor and Very Bad	—	2	12	14	Poor and Very Bad	—	2	8	10
<i>Total</i>	41	104	35	180*	<i>Total</i>	8	95	26	129†

\* Eight cases unclassified. † Twenty-eight cases unclassified.

### TECHNICIANS

Like Assessments	128	:	71%
Unlike Assessments	52	:	29%
	180	:	100%

### TRAINEES

Like Assessments	105	:	81%
Unlike Assessments	24	:	19%
	129	:	100%

adjustment is set out for technicians in Table 18 and for technicians and trainees together in Table 19. These relationships are statistically significant ( $P < .05$  for technicians and  $P < .01$  for technicians and trainees taken together). They confirm the conclusion based on the skill ratings.

It is probable that status factors are not the only ones contributing to this relationship between skill and adjustment. Age or general

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

intelligence may also be important in this connection. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to control either of these factors. The Ministry's records on the factor of age were not sufficiently complete to enable the relationship between age and adjustment to be independently investigated. It is true that the majority of the technicians tended, on the whole, to be older than the trainees; but it is open to question whether older men are likely to make a better adjustment. In fact, as far as adaptability is concerned, the reverse might be expected to be the case.

TABLE 18  
*Occupational Status and Adjustment*  
*Technicians*

<i>Occupational Status</i>	<i>Adjustment</i>					
	<i>Excellent and Good</i>		<i>Average, Poor and Very Bad</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Skilled	65	62	39	37	104	100
Others	35	46	41	54	76	100
<i>Total</i>	100	56	80	44	180*	100

\* Eight cases unclassified.

An important aspect of the relationship between the skill of the West Indians and their adjustment almost certainly arises as a result of the other influences which are brought to bear upon any person in the process by which he acquires a skill. Professor Pear<sup>1</sup> draws attention to the importance of this when he suggests that mental attitudes and ideals are created in the process of learning, which, over a long period, take on the nature of a sentiment and are carried over to other activities. Acquiring a skill in work in this way is a discipline and a character-forming experience which is valuable in other areas of life. This applies especially to the technicians who underwent a full apprenticeship and thus gained some of the social as well as technical skills which go with an apprenticeship scheme. Furthermore, such men were relatively free from the influence of prolonged unemployment, from which some of their less fortunate comrades suffered. The very fact that they had a

<sup>1</sup> Pear, T. H., *Skill in Work and Play*, p. 93 (Methuen, London, 1924.)



## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

longer period of initiation into the environment of industry itself may have been important.

In support of the findings regarding skill and adjustment, which have been based on the documentary records about the West Indians, it can be said that they appear to be borne out by the experience of the Welfare Officer, of personnel managers who were concerned with the men, and by the present writer in the course of his more intensive interviews with and studies of the men.

TABLE 19  
*Occupational Status and Adjustment  
Technicians and Trainees*

<i>Occupational Status</i>	<i>Adjustment</i>					
	<i>Excellent and Good</i>		<i>Average, Poor and Very Bad</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Skilled	67	63	39	37	106	100
Others	90	44	113	56	203	100
<i>Total</i>	157	51	152	49	309*	100

\* Thirty-six cases unclassified.

### 4. OTHER CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

In the course of the investigation a number of other hypotheses regarding the factors contributing to adjustment were examined. It has been suggested, for example, that the men from a particular Colony may have adjusted better than others. As far as the statistical data were able to show, there does not appear to be any foundation for this view; no significant difference was found in the adjustment of the men from different Colonies.

It has also been suggested that date of arrival in Britain may be associated with degree of adjustment, but here again no statistically significant relationship was found.

An interesting insight into some of the factors possibly contributing to maladjustment is provided by the investigation into the incidence of neuroses in industry carried out by the Medical Research Council

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

during the war.<sup>1</sup> Certain factors were found to be associated with more than a usual incidence of neurosis; the circumstances were:

1. Working over seventy-five hours of industrial duty per week.
2. Taking the least adequate diets.
3. Restricted social contact, recreation or leisure interests.
4. Widowhood or separation.
5. Considerable abnormal responsibilities.
6. Work found boring or disliked.
7. Very light or sedentary work.
8. Work requiring skill inappropriate to the worker's intelligence.
9. Assembly, bench or toolroom work.
10. Work requiring constant attention, especially if giving little scope for initiative or responsibility.
11. Work programmes offering little variety.
12. Tasks for which lighting was unsatisfactory.

It is significant that many of the above characteristics were especially applicable to the circumstances of the West Indian immigrant group. The tendency to work long hours and excessive overtime was frequently remarked upon. The 'rate-buster mentality', often associated with feelings of inferiority, appears to have been common. The reason usually given by the men for this preoccupation with work was the possibility of large overtime earnings. They were endeavouring 'to make hay while the sun shines': some were only too well aware that the opportunity to earn such large incomes would not last for ever, and they were anxious to make the best of it: often very large sums were saved or sent to families at home.

Inadequate diets must have been frequent among the West Indians, many of whom found it extremely difficult to adjust themselves to English food and cooking: to this day, a West Indian's nostalgia for home often takes the form of a meal consisting entirely of West Indian dishes prepared in his own way. Climate, too, appears to have had a depressing effect on many of the men, who found English winters a severe trial, after the sunnier climate to which they had been accustomed. Respiratory complaints appear to have been common; and the patent medicine bottle a permanent feature of the West Indian's equipment.

Sexual factors have already been discussed in connection with adjustment<sup>2</sup> and these are also mentioned in the Medical Research Council's

<sup>1</sup> Fraser, Russel, *Incidence of Neurosis Among Factory Workers* (H.M.S.O., London, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> See page 79 *et. seq.*

## ADJUSTMENT OF WEST INDIANS

Report, especially where people used to sexual expression are suddenly deprived of it as in widowhood or separation.

From the point of view of the adjustment of West Indians the most interesting of the results of the Medical Research Council's investigation into the incidence of neurosis is the high correlation found between neurosis and restricted social contacts and recreation. The authors state that 'the circumstances outside the factory which were associated with a high incidence of neurosis are characterised by unsatisfactory relationships. The more unsatisfactory the relationships the closer the association'.<sup>1</sup> The authors claim that a decrease in social contacts was the circumstance, outside the factory, most commonly associated with neurosis. It is not difficult to see, in the light of the evidence presented in Chapter VII, that the West Indians were singularly liable to become maladjusted as a result of the feelings of isolation and rejection, which their experiences of colour prejudice in the community at large naturally created.

In fact, all the evidence points to the conclusion that the best adjusted West Indians were those who succeeded in establishing satisfactory personal relationships with others, whether through a successful marriage or through fulfilling a rôle which gained respect and status, such as excelling in cricket, music or in their work in the factory. Maladjustment appears to have been the product of anxiety and insecurity, often the result of a severe colour consciousness aggravated by a sense of deprivation and isolation, which frequently had its origin in actual experiences of colour prejudice and discrimination in the community.

<sup>1</sup> Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 9.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE END OF THE SCHEME

A NUMBER of problems in connection with the scheme for West Indian workers in Britain arose at the end of the war. Some of these, particularly with regard to employment difficulties, have already been discussed in Chapter IV. In this chapter consideration will be given to some of the administrative problems that arose with the winding-up of the scheme and the repatriation of men to the West Indies. It will be recognised, from what has been written so far, that when the official scheme was brought to an end in 1946 the West Indian technicians and trainees ceased to be a special group in any way. Both administratively and socially they merged with the other West Indians in Britain, in fact with the rest of the coloured population. In any remarks that have been made regarding the situation after 1946 it has not been possible to distinguish between the circumstances of the volunteer workers, who came over during the war, and the many other West Indians who took up residence in Liverpool and the surrounding districts, after the war. More will be said about this in section four of this chapter.

A few men left the scheme before the end of the war; some were repatriated on health grounds or for bad behaviour. Others joined the Merchant Navy or His Majesty's Forces. It is notable that of those who left the scheme at any early date to join the Services a high proportion were among the poor and badly adjusted cases. This is shown in Tables 20 and 21. This is not unnatural, since these men might be expected to be the most restless and unable to settle down. Furthermore, in some cases where the man had been involved in a criminal action of some kind he was advised to leave the scheme and try to make a fresh start elsewhere. It has been suggested that in other cases, where better adjusted or skilled men joined the Forces, it was often the result of an affair with a girl who had since become pregnant. In some cases the

## THE END OF THE SCHEME

man was quite prepared to marry the girl but was unable to do so because of objections from the girl's parents.

### 1. POST-WAR TRAINING

As early as 1944 the authorities began to give consideration to the inevitable problems of the post-war period. A scheme of post-war training was envisaged and the possibility of this was mentioned to some of the men in December 1944. Unfortunately, many of the men obtained an exaggerated impression of the scale and intention of the scheme and many were disappointed by its actual terms, when it was announced over a year later. The original proposals for the scheme had been of a

TABLE 20

*Adjustment according to Procedure on Leaving Scheme  
Technicians and Trainees*

Adjust- ment	Procedure on Leaving Scheme										
	Accepted Repatria- tion		Refused Repatria- tion		Joined H.M.F. or M.N.	Embar- ked U.S.A., etc.	Deceased	Failed to Report		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.	No.	No.	%	No.	%
Excellent	20	41	22	45	2	1	1	3	6	49	100
Good	40	37	44	41	2	—	4	18	17	108	100
Average	31	34	34	37	10	1	1	14	15	91	100
Poor	8	16	14	29	18	—	—	9	18	49	100
Very Bad	3	—	5	—	2	—	2	—	—	12	—
Total	102	33	119	38	34	2	8	44	14	309*	—

\* Thirty-six cases unclassified.

more ambitious nature, but these had to be modified to be comparable with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour schemes for English ex-service men and war workers. The final version was outlined in the Colonial Office pamphlet 'Further Education and Vocational Training'.

The post-war training scheme was divided into two parts—further education and vocational training. By further education was meant education beyond the secondary school, either at a university or other

## THE END OF THE SCHEME

establishment of higher education. The course might be part or full time. The vocational-training section was intended as a means of giving training, mainly in technical work, for men who, because of war service, had not been able to undertake proper training or whose training had been interrupted. The primary condition for receiving either a further education or vocational training grant was that the applicant had given effective full-time service in work of national importance during the war. In some cases consideration was given to men with full trade qualifications who had shown exceptional abilities in the course of the war, and who would merit training for a higher profession. Emphasis was also placed upon whether or not the training in question would be of benefit to the person on returning to his Colony. The Colonial Office wished

TABLE 21

*Adjustment according to Procedure on leaving Scheme  
Technicians and Trainees  
(Grouped)*

<i>Adjustment</i>	<i>Joined H.M.F., etc.</i>		<i>Rest</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	
Excellent and Good	4	2.5	153	97.4	157
Average, Poor and Very Bad	30	19.7	122	80.3	152
<i>Total</i>	34	11.0	275	89.0	309*

\* Thirty-six cases unclassified.

to be satisfied that there would be employment available in the Colony. Each applicant agreed to return to his Colony on completing training. In the case of the West Indians who came over under the scheme a further stipulation was made: they must not be in debt to their hostel.

### 2. WINDING UP THE SCHEME

Letters were sent to all men on the scheme explaining the details of the training plan, and inviting applications. Those who did not wish to apply for training could obtain immediate repatriation. It was clear from the beginning that the majority of the technicians would not qualify for grants as they were already fully trained. Many of these men,



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therefore, accepted early repatriation. Others deferred repatriation by making applications for training, which they had little intention of actually pursuing. Ultimately, about twelve of the men who came over under the scheme received grants under the Further Education and Vocational Training Scheme. Many more Colonials who had served in the armed services received grants.

The circumstances under which the men left the scheme are set out in Tables 22 and 23. As has been pointed out many of those joining the Forces or the Merchant Navy did so earlier in the war, and as a result

TABLE 22

### *Procedure on leaving Scheme Technicians*

<i>Contingent</i>	<i>Accepted Repatriation</i>		<i>Refused Repatriation</i>		<i>Joined H.M.F. or M.N.</i>		<i>Embarked U.S.A. etc.</i>	<i>Deceased</i>	<i>Failed to Report</i>	<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1	10	20	26	51	10	20	—	1	4	51	100
2	21	36	24	41	9	16	—	1	3	58	100
3	30	42	27	38	10	14	1	2	1	71	100
<i>Total</i>	61	34	77	43	29	16	1	4	8	180*	100

\* Eight cases unclassified.

were struck off the scheme. This applied also to those who failed to report or were otherwise not amenable to discipline. Others were removed from the scheme upon accepting repatriation, or upon refusing an offer of repatriation, which was made at the end of the post-war training, or as soon as the decision not to make a grant had been made. Expatriation grants ceased on expulsion from the scheme or on the day the man arrived or would have arrived home. It will be noted that the percentage accepting repatriation is approximately the same for technicians and trainees but that the percentage refusing repatriation is high for technicians (43 per cent cf. 33 per cent  $P.<.07$ ). This is particularly marked for the first contingent. The percentage joining the Forces or the Merchant Navy is much higher among the technicians ( $P.<.01$ ). The number of trainees from British Honduras who accepted repatriation is about average, and the number from British Guiana who refused repatriation is above average.

TABLE 23

*Procedure for Trainees leaving Scheme*

<i>Contingent and Colony</i>	<i>Accepted Repatriation</i>		<i>Refused Repatriation</i>		<i>Joined H.M.F. or M.N.</i>	<i>Embarked U.S.A., etc.</i>	<i>Deceased</i>	<i>Failed to Report</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>				<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
4 Honduras	9	64	3	21	—	—	1	1	7	14	100
5 Jamaica	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
6 Bahamas	4	29	5	36	—	—	—	5	36	14	100
7 Jamaica	14	35	10	25	—	—	—	16	40	40	100
8 Barbados	2	—	2	—	1	—	—	3	—	8	—
9 Guiana	3	16	10	53	1	—	1	4	21	19	100
10 Leewards	6	32	6	32	3	1	2	1	5	19	100
11 Windwards	2	15	5	39	—	—	—	6	46	13	100
<i>Total</i>	41	32	42	33	5	1	4	36	28	129*	100

\* Twenty-eight cases unclassified.

## THE END OF THE SCHEME

Table 24 sets out the procedure on leaving the scheme in relation to date of arrival. If those arriving between February 1941 and October 1942 are grouped together the percentage accepting repatriation is 36·3 per cent, compared with 25·8 per cent for those arriving after that date (that is the last five contingents). This suggests that the earlier arrivals were more anxious to get home than those who had only spent a short time in this country. There was the further factor that the technicians were told sooner if they did not qualify for post-war training. They were the first to receive the offer of repatriation, which they accepted. These early repatriates, as will be shown later, found conditions in the West Indies poor, and wrote urging their friends in Britain to stay there.

TABLE 24

### *Date of Arrival and Circumstances of leaving Scheme Technicians and Trainees*

<i>Date of Arrival</i>	<i>Accepted Repatriation</i>		<i>Others</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Feb. 1941–Oct. 1942	77	36	135	64	212	100
Nov. 1942–Jan. 1943	25	26	72	74	97	100
<i>Total</i>	102	33	207	67	309*	100

\* Thirty-six cases unclassified.

Table 25 shows the procedure upon leaving the scheme in relation to occupation among technicians. It is significant that a high percentage of electrical trades (skilled) refused repatriation and a low percentage accepted ( $P: < .07$ ). This suggests that the men in the electrical trades felt that their prospects of employment in Jamaica were even poorer than did those in other occupations. Electricians were, of course, in demand in England.

By the end of 1946 many of the technicians and trainees had accepted repatriation and others, having refused an offer of repatriation, had been struck off the scheme. The latter no longer qualified for an expatriation grant and were no longer regarded as under the special jurisdiction of the Welfare Officer for the West Indians. In October



TABLE 25

*Procedure on leaving Scheme (by Occupation)*  
*Technicians*

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Accepted Repatriation</i>		<i>Refused Repatriation</i>		<i>Joined H.M.F. or M.N.</i>		<i>Embarked U.S.A., etc.</i>	<i>Deceased</i>	<i>Failed to Report</i>	<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Engineering— skilled semi-skilled Electrical Trades— skilled semi-skilled Building and Civil Engineering	34	40	35	41	9	11	1	2	4	85	100
	22	32	27	40	16	24	—	2	1	68	100
	3	15	13	65	1	5	—	—	3	20	100
	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	2	—
	2	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	5	—
<i>Total</i>	61	34	77	43	29	16	1	4	8	180*	100

\* Eight cases unclassified.

## THE END OF THE SCHEME

1946, ninety-four men in the Merseyside area were still 'on the scheme' and of them thirty-two were unemployed; some of them had been unemployed for several months with consequent deterioration in morale. The following extract, from a letter to the Welfare Officer from one of these men (although couched in rather extraordinary and high-flowing language), reflects the sense of frustration experienced:

'At this critical juncture, I must make it known to the authorities concerned that I view my present position as the approach to moral degradation. The fifth inst. make it six and a half months since I have done no work. You are doing your best to assist me. Today after walking ten miles, I returned home with a feeling of despair. My patience is getting exhausted.

'Due to the answers given me by some employers, I am of the opinion that something is terribly wrong. The replies are tainted with meanness and unwise counsels. I know that there are some honest minded people who by their influence can find a solution to a not insoluble question. . . .

'I applied for training. I don't know when it will start. I cannot say if I shall be selected. Pending the Judges' decision I am distressed. N.B. Want of occupation is no rest; a mind quite vacant is a mind distressed: I worked honestly for small wages paid to me as a trainee; I am not indebted to the hostel. I cannot refrain from saying that I regard such a state of affairs with profound regrets and view these my sad experiences with a very serious eye.

'To sit floundering in a swamp of proletarian misery, enervated by a relaxing climate, and demoralised by the institution of insecurity, is a question which needs an answer tantamount to something tangible, for which I shall be most grateful.'

By December 1946 it was reported that although difficulty was still found in finding alternative employment in the Merseyside area, the number of unemployed West Indians had been reduced during the month. Some of the technicians had found employment outside the area, including Manchester, Southampton and elsewhere. Such transfers naturally involved for the men the problem of finding suitable accommodation. This was a particularly serious difficulty for those with families and, even more than for white men unemployed in Liverpool, made the acceptance of work elsewhere a doubtful advantage.

### 3. REPATRIATION AND CONDITIONS IN WEST INDIES

In August 1945 a deputation of thirteen technicians resident at one of the Liverpool hostels sent the following letter to the Welfare Department, expressing concern regarding the employment prospects if they were to return to the West Indies:

'We the undersigned beg to state now that the question of going home is in progress a positive understanding should be reached re our employment at

## THE END OF THE SCHEME

home. We feel we should be sent to a job, or if possible priority should be given to us, and not sent in the fields of unemployment chokeful of experience with distress and poverty covering us due to the patriotic sacrifices we have made at the time most vitally needed.

'Remember we have no unemployment benefit, old age pension or dole at home. We must live on our merits. Quite a lot of promises have been made to us, but none fulfilled. . . .'

The Welfare Officer forwarded the letter to the Regional Office with the following comments:

'The letter is self-explanatory, but I would like to confirm that these men have from time to time displayed an anxiety on the line of employment in Jamaica when they return, which has never been satisfactorily allayed. Some of the men . . . who have been repatriated, found on arrival that there was nothing for them, and have written back to express their doubts and cynicism.'

There can be no doubt that this anxiety regarding prospects of employment on return to the West Indies had a legitimate foundation, which is borne out by all the official reports upon the social and economic conditions of the West Indian Colonies at that time. The seriousness and extent of unemployment, especially in Jamaica, has been remarked by three successive Comptrollers for Development and Welfare in their official reports. Reporting for the years 1943 and 1944, Sir Frank Stockdale<sup>1</sup> wrote:

'Unemployment problems become more difficult to resolve year by year, particularly among the town dwellers. The position in Jamaica has been acute for several years, especially in Kingston, Spanish Town and the northern coastal centres of population which, during the heyday of the banana industry and before the advent of motor transport, were flourishing seaport towns. In Barbados there is a measure of under-employment at certain times of the year; and St. Lucia usually has unemployment problems to face from time to time at Castries and elsewhere. In British Honduras there are also unemployment problems occasionally in Belize.'

The seriousness of the post-war position was confirmed by Sir John MacPherson<sup>2</sup> in his report for the years 1945 and 1946:

'Towards the end of 1945 unemployment in Jamaica and Barbados threatened to become acute, mainly because of large-scale repatriation of British West Indian workers from employment in the United States of America and to a lesser degree the return of demobilised service men . . .'

<sup>1</sup> Stockdale, Sir F., *Development and Welfare in the West Indies, 1943-4* (H.M.S.O., London, 1945).

<sup>2</sup> MacPherson, Sir J., *Development and Welfare in the West Indies, 1945-6* (H.M.S.O., London, 1947).



## THE END OF THE SCHEME

In his report for 1947-9 Sir Hubert Rance<sup>1</sup> confirms the above reports by reference to the census figures of unemployment obtained for Jamaica in 1943 and for the other Colonies in 1946. The percentage unemployment for Jamaica in 1943 was as high as 25·6 per cent and as Sir John MacPherson pointed out was probably higher still in the post-war years. The 1946 census for the other Colonies showed a range from 2·5 per cent unemployment in British Guiana to nearly 10 per cent for St. Lucia. In all Colonies there appears to have been a considerable measure of under-employment and seasonal employment.

During 1945 a small number of technicians and trainees had been repatriated on health grounds, or because of unsatisfactory behaviour, but it was not until the beginning of 1946 that the terms of the post-war training scheme and the arrangements for repatriation were announced. A number of technicians and a few trainees accepted repatriation at once. These men were quick to inform their comrades still in Britain of the poor prospects awaiting them at home and advised them to stay in England for as long as possible. This situation was especially noted by the Welfare Officer in his report in July 1946:

'Men are holding themselves at the moment for training and/or repatriation. As mentioned previously, in several cases the applicants for training have been inspired by the lack of desire to return home. This has become more noticeable since reports have come back from Jamaica from men who have already been repatriated that they are idling or have been reinstated in their old jobs at the exact point where they left off five years ago. Reports are current, and some correspondence received in this Department indicated that the men are getting ready to leave the Island again. All these things create uneasiness and the feeling that the welfare of Colonials both in the Services and who have worked in Industry, is not properly looked after on the other side.'

The following are some of the comments made by different men upon arrival home:

'The climate is lovely, yes, but to speak of anything else isn't worth the time. Since we returned home, it's as if we are being penalised for offering our services as volunteers. It is true that many of us through personal connections, and others through the kind thoughts of English firms, have found themselves more or less settled, but on the whole the boys home already are so confounded that many as you are aware are finding their way back to England, where they feel a chance will be given them. Others are going to the U.S.A., Cuba, Canada, and so on, while there are some that have decided to dig in and make a fight for it . . .'

<sup>1</sup> Rance, Sir H., *Development and Welfare in the West Indies*, 1947-9 (H.M.S.O., London, 1950).

## THE END OF THE SCHEME

'I have returned home to find that I am minus a job and without any visible means of subsistence. I have tried and am still trying for a job, but without any success. I have applied to the administrator for a job in the civil service but still no reply to my application. I do not know what are the chances of getting into the Merchant Navy, but I would be glad if you would contact a shipping firm that has trade with these islands and arrange that I shall join one of their ships on the return journey to the U.K. either to work my passage or to work permanently with them . . .'

'I have reached home safely. But there is one mistake I have made, and that was to leave England without a recommendation. On leaving Jamaica for England we were told that on return our jobs would be given back to us. But now we have returned they have forfeited their agreement. No one pays us any attention . . .'

'I should have written to you before now as promised, but after the shock of existing conditions here it's a wonder I am capable of writing at all; to be quite frank I really expected things to be bad, but not in my wildest dreams could I imagine anything as bad. We had a little chat about the railway before I left England, I don't know if you remember; but bad as I told you then what conditions were, it was paradise compared to now. You might get the impression that I expected to come back here and fall right into the lap of luxury and to be made a fuss of, but on the contrary I wanted nothing of the sort; all I wanted was a square deal and that I haven't got. I am just given my job back, to start where I left off, take it or leave it; as a matter of fact you are made to feel that you are not wanted, and they are only doing you a favour when you are given your job back . . .'

It is clear from the facts regarding unemployment in the West Indies given in the official reports and from the sentiments expressed in these letters, that the problem of resettlement for men returning to the West Indies was serious. It was clearly recognised by the authorities in Britain that men demobilised from the services needed special advice and assistance in adjustment to civilian life and in seeking appropriate employment. For this purpose the Ministry of Labour set up special Resettlement Advice Bureaux in every town in the country, which, fulfilled a very important function. Their work was much facilitated by the full employment conditions, which existed in most parts of the country after the war, and the accompanying demand for labour of all kinds. The contrast with conditions in the West Indies is very great. Not only were there few if any official arrangements comparable with the Resettlement Advice Service in England, but widespread unemployment made the difficulties in the way of returning Colonial ex-servicemen and volunteer workers much more serious. The situation was comparable only with the chaos in this country after the first world war, which the government in England were determined not to repeat.

## THE END OF THE SCHEME

### 4. RETURN OF WEST INDIANS TO ENGLAND

In the light of the circumstances above it is not surprising that a number of the West Indians, particularly Jamaicans, who had accepted repatriation began to find their way back to this country. As early as March 1947 the Welfare Officer reported: 'In consequence of the conditions prevailing in the West Indies, several men previously repatriated by this department have returned to this country; a few have already been in touch with this office with a view to being placed in employment.' It was also remarked that in addition to the difficulties in the way of placing these men in employment there was also the problem of obtaining reinstatement into their trade unions.

The number of West Indians in Britain in the post-war years seeking employment has continued to grow. There were those members of the 'scheme' who did not accept the offer of repatriation, but chose to remain in Britain; there were a few West Indian ex-servicemen who were demobilised and did not return home; there were the repatriated workers and ex-servicemen who sought an early opportunity to return to Britain once more; and there were the large numbers of men and women who came after the war for the first time, in search of work or to join their relatives.

Some of the West Indians coming to Britain did so by working their passage, which usually meant signing on a ship at home and then refusing the option of a return voyage. There were others who stowed away in order to come. The procedure in the case of these men depended on the policy of the shipping company. In some cases the men would be prosecuted, in which case they would normally receive a short period of imprisonment, and would then be released. The Colonial Office welfare department would endeavour to assist the man if he was in need of help to obtain clothing or lodging. The placing in employment of these men was the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, who were concerned to encourage West Indians not to remain in the Merseyside area, where the prospects of employment were worse than in other parts of the country.

By far the largest number of West Indians coming to Britain did so by the ordinary means of paying for a passage on one of the ships proceeding from the West Indies. In July 1948 approximately four hundred West Indians disembarked from the *S.S. Empire Windrush* at London. Of these it was possible to find immediate placings for two hundred and two, the majority of whom were skilled or semi-skilled



## THE END OF THE SCHEME

workers. The remainder scattered throughout the country. Twenty-three found their way to Liverpool where no immediate placings could be offered to any of them. Twenty-one proceeded to Manchester where it was possible to place fifteen, but the remainder joined the one hundred and fifty coloured Colonials at that time unemployed in the city.

In October 1948, one hundred and eighty West Indians landed at Liverpool from S.S. *Orbita*. Of these a number were students or wives joining their husbands and the like, and did not concern the Ministry of Labour. Eighty proceeded to addresses they had in different parts of the country and were assisted with free railway warrants for this purpose. There remained in Liverpool fifty-four men and women who either obtained private lodgings or stayed in one of the Colonial Office hostels. Of these, approximately half were skilled or semi-skilled workers for whom it was possible to obtain places fairly quickly. Of the remainder, it was reported, 'The Jamaicans left on our hands are not good placing propositions. In the main they consist of clerks, motor drivers and shop assistants. The men are registered at Leece Street Employment Exchange, and we are doing everything possible to place them, but it may take some time.'

Thirty-nine more Jamaicans landed in Liverpool in December 1948 on the S.S. *Reina Del Pacifico*, of whom fifteen were women. As many as possible of these were issued with free railway warrants and dispersed to other parts of the country, but a number remained to seek employment in the Merseyside area. In June 1949 the S.S. *Georgic* brought a further two hundred and fifty-three West Indians of whom forty-five were women, a large number of whom were also seeking employment, although one or two had come to join their husbands. Thirty-four of the men in the party were completely unskilled, but the remainder were skilled or semi-skilled tradesmen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Further parties of several hundred arrived during 1950 and 1951 and have as far as possible been dispersed throughout the country. It has been estimated that post-war immigration from the West Indies at one time reached as high as 1,750 per annum, c.f. Banton, M., 'Immigration from British Colonies to the United Kingdom', *Population Studies*, Vol. VII, No. 1, July 1953.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

**I**N Chapter I, three main hypotheses were set out which appeared to be corroborated by a great deal of research on inter-group relations in the United States. It remains to examine these hypotheses, once more, in the light of the evidence presented in this report.

#### 1. IN-GROUP/OUT-GROUP HYPOTHESIS

In the discussion of the relationships between West Indians and others on Merseyside, one fact stands out beyond all others: the clearly marked in-group/out-group delineation which exists between white and coloured people. The conspicuousness of the Negro marks him as a member of a group, which is regarded as somewhat strange and not quite belonging to the society as a whole. The West Indian, in his turn, tends to become (if he is not so already) extremely colour conscious and aware of his membership of a minority group. This feeling remains despite the actual heterogeneity of the West Indian group and the strong class feelings within the coloured population. 'In Liverpool we have to mix with other coloured people we would not look at at home', is a typical comment. The white members of the community do not appear to distinguish between Colonial-born and English-born Negroes. In fact the existence of the latter group is frequently overlooked altogether, and the assumption made that all coloured people are recent arrivals in the city from overseas.<sup>1</sup>

The spheres in which this in-group feeling on the part of white people is seen most clearly are housing and sex. Employment questions are also subject to divisions between coloured and white which are not quite so marked as those in housing and sexual relations, but which would clearly become of greater importance were it not for the relatively full employment situation. It follows from the strong in-group/out-group attitudes, and the increasing colour consciousness of the minority

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Richmond, A. H., *Sociological Review*, op. cit., p. 20.

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group, that assimilation has not taken place and is not likely to be achieved so long as these attitudes persist.

### 2. STATUS/SECURITY HYPOTHESIS

The process whereby a minority group endeavours to achieve assimilation is not only the process whereby an individual is incorporated into a society. It is, as Park has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> also the struggle of the individual to achieve social status. Everything which marks the minority group as strangers—manners, accent, habits of speech and thought, and skin colour—makes this struggle more difficult. The cultural conflict which ensues heightens self-consciousness among members of both cultural groups, majority and minority. The overwhelming desire and object of the immigrant West Indian is to gain acceptance in his new society: he wishes to be thought of as a person, respected and understood for his own unique qualities. Every action which suggests that he is being judged, not for what he is or believes himself to be individually, but simply as 'another nigger', is an affront to his status and his self-respect. He experiences a feeling of rejection and frustration which intensifies his anxiety and often leads to aggressive reactions.

There are two main fields of social life in which this problem of status arises; these may be described as the social aspect and the sexual aspect. It is notable that Myrdal<sup>2</sup> has pointed out that 'it is inherent in our type of modern civilisation that sex and social status are for most individuals the danger points, the directions whence he fears the sinister onslaughts on his personal security. These two factors are more likely than anything else to push a life problem deep down into the subconscious and load it with emotions. In a manner and a degree most uncomfortable for the Negro people in America both the sexual and the social complexes have become related to the Negro problem.' This appears to be borne out in the present study to a marked degree. Prejudice and discrimination against the Negro appear in just those areas of life where the Negro is thought to represent a threat to the status of the white man. Cox<sup>3</sup> has criticised this view of Myrdal on the ground that he does not sufficiently acknowledge the influence of economic factors in determining the relationships between coloured and white people. Cox has endeavoured to demonstrate that even the sexual rivalry and hostility expressed by the white man has its ultimate origin in economic factors

<sup>1</sup> Park, R. E., *Race and Culture*, pp. 49 and 359 (Free Press, Illinois, 1950).

<sup>2</sup> Myrdal, G., *An American Dilemma*, pp. 59–60 (Harper, New York, 1944).

<sup>3</sup> Cox, O. C., *Caste, Class and Race* (Doubleday, New York, 1948).



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and exploitation.<sup>1</sup> This view does not seem to make the necessary distinction between the factors primarily conducive to the expression of discrimination and the factors underlying prejudice. In this sense colour prejudice is a state or attitude of mind implying a dislike or rejection of Negroes as a group. Discrimination may or may not be accompanied by prejudicial attitudes, but it is essentially an act of deprivation directed towards Negroes individually. The hypothesis which appears to be suggested by the present study is that the predominating factor governing acts of *discrimination* is in most cases economic, whereas the ultimate factor at the bottom of *prejudicial attitudes* is connected either with status or sex. Some elaboration of this hypothesis is required.

### *Status and Sexual Factors in Colour Prejudice*

The discussion of the relationships between the West Indians and white people in the community and in the factories has shown clearly that the two areas in which the English person tends to be most sensitive about Negroes are precisely those areas where he feels the Negro is an actual or potential threat to his security and status. Very often the *fear* that the Negro may be a competitor for employment, for housing or for women is more likely to create prejudice than is the *reality* situation. Bettelheim and Janowitz<sup>2</sup> have pointed out, and this is confirmed by Robb's<sup>3</sup> study, that an *expectation* of deprivation is more closely associated with a high degree of prejudice than is the actual experience of deprivation. In Liverpool the memories of pre-war unemployment are vivid and the fear that such a situation will be repeated still exists. It is this fear which, more than anything else, leads white workers to resent the Negro. The study of prejudice among U.S. veterans also shows that semi-skilled workers tend to be more outspokenly or intensely anti-Negro than other workers. Other levels of socio-economic status were not significantly related to intolerance. The authors conclude 'that the group which is directly threatened in its economic [job] security is likely to be more intolerant of the group with which it feels it is in competition'.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, it has already been noted in the present study, that prejudice against the West Indians tended to be great among those semi-skilled workers who considered that they should have been upgraded

<sup>1</sup> Cox, O. C., *Caste, Class and Race*, p. 227 (Doubleday, New York, 1948).

<sup>2</sup> Bettelheim and Janowitz, *Dynamics of Prejudice*, Chapters 5 and 6 (Harper, New York, 1950).

<sup>3</sup> Robb, J., *Anti-Semitism* (Tavistock, London, 1954).

<sup>4</sup> Bettelheim and Janowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

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before West Indians were employed in skilled capacities. On the shipyards after the initial difficulties with the trade union had been settled, it tended to be the semi-skilled 'mates' and labourers rather than the skilled men, who objected to working with the West Indians. In general the Negro on Merseyside tends to be regarded as a threat to the employment prospects of white workers. While this attitude has its roots in the economic history of the area, its present-day expression is a result of the fear among the white workers that they may lose their status. It is the fact that the coloured workers are associated in the minds of others with menial tasks and inferior status, as well as with competition, which provides the real threat to the white worker's sense of security.

A similar analysis applies to the prejudice against Negroes as neighbours and sex partners, which was discussed in Chapter VI. The persistence of stereotypes, concerning undesirable characteristics of coloured people, results in an attitude of mind, among white people, in which they are afraid of what others will think of them if they associate with Negroes. The need among white people concerned (especially those who, for other reasons, are already insecure in their own lives) for the approval of others of their own class and ethnic group is so great that they dare not do anything which might result in disapproval. The more basic the anxiety of this kind, the more virulent will be the expression of prejudice, in an effort to bolster up the individual's own sense of status and security. Similarly, inter-personal relations of a sexual character, whether the passing contact with a prostitute or the more lasting relationship of marriage, provide an important source of security, and a release from anxiety and tension. A threat to the stability of sexual relations by any rival is enough to create considerable hostility. When the threatened rivalry comes from a member, or members, of another ethnic group this adds a further aggravating factor. Such questions as colour tend, in these circumstances, to be rationalised and generalised into strong prejudice against the Negro. Sexual stereotypes of a derogatory character are then believed, and expressed with even greater conviction. Such is the vicious circle created by such irrational thinking.

### *Economic Factors in Discrimination*

While it appears that status and sexual factors are primary ones in the creation of colour prejudice, certain other influences come into play when prejudice is translated into a positive act of discrimination. The evidence of the present research, which is borne out in many other enquiries, appears to suggest that economic considerations play an

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important part in determining whether or not discrimination will occur. Experience in the United States during the war appears to be very similar to that already described in this report. Before the war discrimination in employment against coloured people was widespread; with the coming of full employment and the enormous demand for labour, resistance to the employment of Negroes was reduced: sometimes a certain amount of official pressure was necessary, exercised through the Fair Employment Practices Committee in America, or through the powers of direction of labour in Britain. However, it is certain that such pressure would have been quite useless had not there been an overwhelming need for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers. When it becomes a question of employing coloured workers or none at all, economic pressure tends to override any personal scruples that an employer may have. Similarly, it can hardly be doubted that the co-operative attitudes of the trade unions during the war, with regard to the employment of West Indians, would not have been possible had there been the widespread unemployment of the pre-war period. Since the war discrimination against Negroes in Britain has reappeared.

The influence of economic factors is not limited to discrimination in employment. The experience with dance halls, and other places of recreation in the city of Liverpool, as elsewhere in Britain, shows that the operation of a colour bar, in these circumstances, is directly related to economic influences. The proprietors of dance halls and similar places are guided in their policy, not by personal feelings about Negroes, but by whether the presence of Negroes will increase or decrease their net profit. So long as the West Indians were regular paying visitors to the dance halls of the city, and their presence did not diminish the number of other patrons, they were welcomed by the management. As soon as other factors arose the situation changed. The presence of large numbers of white Americans in England, willing and eager to spend large sums of money in recreational pursuits, made their influence felt on the policies of such establishments. If they took offence to the presence of the West Indian Negroes, the white Americans might stay away; or they might pick a fight and, if this happened frequently, other patrons would stay away. In one instance, at least, an official ban on military personnel, English, Dominion and American, attending a particular dance hall, was sufficient to change the policy of a dance-hall proprietor who had hitherto taken the view that those who were 'fit to fight', were 'fit to mix'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See page 89.



## CONCLUSION

Economic factors also play a part in the problem of housing. When coloured tenants occupy property, especially where they begin to live in a particular neighbourhood in considerable numbers, real-estate values tend to fall. This is a direct result of the prejudice against Negroes which may have its origin in the sexual and other considerations already discussed. But from the point of view of property owners it is the economic factor which is predominant. It is the fear of deteriorating property values which leads to the inclusion of restrictive clauses in leases, forbidding the letting of the property to persons of non-European descent. The economic basis for these clauses is demonstrated by the fact that, where Negroes have become the main tenants and leaseholders in a particular area, landlords clamour to have restrictive clauses removed, because they prevent them from letting at all.<sup>1</sup> In Liverpool it is noticed that property owners who have resisted letting to coloured people often relent when they discover that coloured tenants can be made to pay much higher rents for the property, in view of the difficulty they have in getting accommodation at all.<sup>2</sup> There is some evidence to suggest that the effect of recent rent restriction legislation, and the setting up of rent tribunals to which people can take complaints against excessive rents, has been that property hitherto let at excessive rents to coloured families has reverted to white occupation. This seems to suggest that the owners are only prepared to let to coloured people if they can obtain an exorbitant rent by doing so. Other things being equal they prefer white tenants.

An examination of the way in which the status/security hypothesis applies to the position of the West Indians in Britain has therefore led to the creation of a further hypothesis to the effect that prejudice is a function of social and sexual status factors, but that discrimination tends to be governed more by economic considerations.

### 3. FRAMES OF REFERENCE/COMMUNICATION HYPOTHESIS

The differentiation between coloured and white people, and the creation of prejudicial attitudes towards Negroes, appears to have had its origin in Liverpool between the two world wars. Stereotypes about the Negro, most of them derogatory, were already common before the war. When the West Indian immigrants arrived in Liverpool they tended, at once, to be judged in the light of these preconceived notions. It was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Drake, St. C., and Cayton, H., *Black Metropolis*, p. 185 (Harcourt, Brace, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jones, D. Caradog. *Economic Status of Coloured Families in the Port of Liverpool*, pp. 17-18 (University Press of Liverpool, 1940).

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some time before people began to realise that their former ideas about coloured people were not applicable to the majority of West Indian immigrants. In some cases there had been no change in the 'frame of reference'.

Where white people have had little or no acquaintance with coloured, beyond what they read in the press and see on the street corners, the derogatory stereotypes tend to remain and the West Indians are still judged in the light of them. Even where some measure of contact exists between the white and coloured groups in the neighbourhood and the factory, racial frames of reference may persist. The very existence of prejudice and stereotypes creates a barrier to communication between the groups, in which behavioural inter-action may be insufficient to break down the habit of thinking in racial terms. In some cases personal contact and knowledge of one or two Negroes, who do not appear to fit the accepted stereotype, merely leads to the view that they are exceptions to the general rule.

The tendency to think in terms of a racial frame of reference and to hold stereotyped attitudes is not limited to the white members of the community. Negroes, too, have stereotyped attitudes towards the white. These also are aggravated by the barriers to communication between the groups. The bad behaviour of one or two Negroes often leads white people to condemn all coloured people. Similarly, one or two examples of prejudice and discrimination are often enough to create a deep hostility towards all white people on the part of Negroes. Even those who have not been subjected to any serious examples of discrimination will identify themselves closely with the less fortunate ones and will emphasise the fundamental sense of inferiority and deprivation under which the Negro population of the city labours. This is especially marked in the course of a group discussion in the presence of a white person—especially a stranger. Such a person is subjected to a heated account, and a long list of complaints, regarding discrimination in housing, employment and other spheres of social life. It is a long while before a West Indian, or any other coloured person, is prepared to discuss the question of colour prejudice and discrimination dispassionately and in the light of the facts.

The frames of reference/barriers to communication hypothesis appears to be amply supported by the evidence of this report. It is interesting to consider the effects, in sociological terms, of the barriers which arose between coloured and white people in the community. In this connection it will be valuable to examine the relationships in the

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light of the concepts of conflict and accommodation as originally defined by the R. E. Park and Chicago school of sociology.<sup>1</sup>

### 4. PATTERN OF RELATIONSHIPS: CONFLICT OR ACCOMMODATION?

It is clear that there have been instances and occasions when open conflict has occurred between the Negro and white peoples in Liverpool. This has not necessarily directly involved all members of either community, but it has been of sufficient gravity to cause outbreaks of physical violence and strong expression of public opinion against the Negro. Such incidents have also created a heightened group consciousness among coloured people and increased their hostility towards white. Of such incidents the disturbances of 1948 are the most obvious example, although there have been other incidents of a minor nature which have also involved physical conflict between coloured and white people.

Nevertheless, from examination of the whole ten years since the arrival of the first West Indian technicians, it is clear that the relationships have not normally been those of conflict. The evidence clearly shows the existence of prejudice and discrimination against the Negro, but this is also an incidental accompaniment to the pattern of relationships defined as that of 'accommodation'. In fact a tendency towards the segregation of the coloured population is one important sign of the accommodation process taking place. The Negroes in their turn have responded to the prejudice and resistance against them in the community by withdrawing into their own primary and secondary groups, seeking their social and recreational life mainly amongst themselves. This tendency was especially marked after the period in the war when dance halls and other places became barred to them. White society as a whole tended to encourage this process, and the setting up of a centre for coloured people in the south end of Liverpool was partly an expression of this. It was felt desirable to encourage coloured people to seek their recreational activities together; the alternative, in the light of the colour bar operating, would have been an even greater increase in tension and frustration, resulting from the absence of any recreational facilities at all. White people were not, of course, prevented from attending the coloured community centre, but in practice only the white girl friends of the coloured men did so. Nor were coloured people especially encouraged to attend other community centres in Liverpool.

Sociologically speaking, the effect of this pattern of accommodation

<sup>1</sup> Park, R. E., and Burgess, N., *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago, 1924).



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was to diminish the degree of actual social contact between the two groups; and, therefore, to minimise the area of actual or potential conflict between them. Coloured people are regarded as inevitable in the Merseyside area and they are tolerated so long as they do not trespass too far into the lives of the majority of its citizens. Any suggestion that they should be encouraged to come here in larger numbers is usually resisted. Any sign that coloured people are occupying a neighbourhood hitherto exclusively occupied by whites tends to lead to the expression of hostility by some, though by no means all, of the existing inhabitants. The actual degree and extent of the hostility appears to be dependent upon the number of coloured families arriving, and whether they are regarded as a threat to the status of the white community. To live in an area known to be predominantly occupied by coloured families is felt by many people to be a sign of a fall in social status. Older inhabitants tend to remark, 'Of course, this used to be a very nice neighbourhood until the "niggers" arrived.'

The way in which Negroes and whites have accommodated themselves to each other, withdrawing into discrete social groups and living on the whole a life in which there is little contact between them, has had further consequences. The most significant of these from the sociological point of view is the resulting intensification of barriers to communication between the groups. These have already been seen to be the cause of initial misunderstandings and stereotypes; the accommodation pattern tends to aggravate these barriers. A process of active assimilation, or even conflict, between groups involves a close and constant contact between them. Contact and communication are the first necessities of assimilation. It is only through a process of interaction that the minority group can be gradually incorporated into the social life of the majority. Accommodation, especially when it reaches an advanced stage with extreme segregation, will actually retard the process of assimilation. The barriers to communication which exist, in such circumstances, prevent the majority from recognising the falsity of the stereotypes held, simply because they really never get to know any of the minority group as persons or with any degree of intimacy. Even if they work near or with them, there will be a tendency to avoid and ignore them, or to adopt a hostile attitude which prevents any degree of 'rapport' being established. This, at any rate, appears to have been the tendency in Liverpool as far as the West Indians and the white members of society are concerned. There are obvious exceptions, but in general the social life of the Negro and white populations is lived separately and

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contact only takes place on the margins, and in such formal rôles as are typified by the customer and sales assistant in a shop. Rarely do white people and Negroes break through this formal rôle and establish essentially person-to-person relationships. When such personal relationships do occur—as between a Negro and his white girl friend—both tend to be rejected by the majority of white people. Even a friendship between a Negro and a white man is regarded as somewhat unusual and is sometimes the object of slight incredulity. A white man seeking refreshment at a café habitually used by coloured men, would be assumed to have entered by mistake. Neither whites nor Negroes would find it easy to believe that he really wanted to eat and drink in the company of a number of coloured people.

It appears, therefore, that the accommodation of Negro to white Liverpool has tended to increase the existing 'social distance' between them.

### 5. VALUE JUDGEMENTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

So far this study has been limited to the objective investigation of a scientific problem of human relations; the conclusions which have been drawn have been of a theoretical nature. They have been limited to certain generalisations which appear to follow from the data which has been interpreted in the light of a number of fairly well-established hypotheses regarding human behaviour. The impartial approach, which has been attempted in this research, is essential if the more practical problems of policy and action in the fields of racial relations and immigration are to be tackled effectively. The kind of understanding which sociological and psychological investigations seek to provide must precede the formulation of policies and plans, if administrators are to avoid the pragmatic procedure of 'trial and error' which can have such disastrous effects on human relations and on human happiness. However, there is, as Barnes<sup>1</sup> and Simey<sup>2</sup> have pointed out, a point at which the spirit of scientific detachment becomes irrelevant; a point when the creative faculty must supersede the analytic and certain constructive proposals for action put forward.

When the academic scientist leaves the world of theories and concepts and begins to consider their application to practical problems he is immediately faced with the problem of value judgements. This is not the place to discuss the relations between philosophy and science; but it is imperative that the social scientist who puts forward recommenda-

<sup>1</sup> Barnes, L., *The Duty of Empire*, p. 308 (Gollancz, London, 1935).

<sup>2</sup> Simey, T. S., in a critical appraisal of Ronald Lippitt's 'Training in Community Relations', *Human Relations*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 211.



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tions for policy and action, based upon his researches, should make quite clear what are the value premises which underly his proposals. Too often programmes of action are put forward, in the name of science, when in fact they merely represent philosophical presuppositions translated into action with the aid of science or technology.

Certain of the value premises underlying the whole of this research are outlined in the first chapter. Here certain additional principles which govern the practical proposals which follow must be mentioned. In the first place it is assumed that a fundamental objective is the promotion, as rapidly as possible, of the social and economic welfare of Colonial peoples, with a view to their acquiring complete self-government at the earliest practicable opportunity. Such a policy has been set forth as the objective of the United Nations for the so-called 'backward territories' and has been endorsed by the United Kingdom government. Secondly, it is assumed that it is desirable to bring about as rapidly as possible the assimilation of all coloured and Colonial peoples who have chosen to make their permanent residence in this country. This implies the implementation of the most effective policies for the removal of prejudice and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. These objectives have also been formulated as part of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights which has been endorsed by Britain. The policy also implies that those Colonial people who come to Britain for shorter periods, without proposing to establish a permanent domicile, should also be given every assistance to integrate into the normal social life of the country, without being subjected to any disability because of their colour, creed or nationality. It also follows from these principles that any bar to intermarriage or any segregation of coloured peoples cannot be permitted. It is not an adequate fulfilment of the principles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights to pursue a policy of *apartheid*, or separate but equal facilities for coloured and white peoples.

Having established these basic principles it remains to consider what practical conclusions and recommendations arise out of this investigation of the assimilation and adjustment of a group of West Indian Negroes in England.

### 6. FULL EMPLOYMENT AND A COLONIAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

The necessity of creating and maintaining a state of full employment, both at home and in the Colonies, follows directly from the principle that the social and economic welfare of Colonial peoples must be an



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immediate objective of any policy. If this were not already taken for granted there are a number of factors brought to light in the present report which emphasise the necessity for it. In the first place, it has been seen that the prime motive which leads many West Indians and other Colonials to make their way to England year after year is the pressure of economic circumstances in their own country. Widespread unemployment, the low standard of living and the poor prospects for the trained man through lack of industrialisation, make the prospect of coming to England an irresistible temptation to many. Added to the negative forces at home are the positive hopes and dreams of many of the immigrants who come to Britain genuinely anxious to acquire knowledge and experience, which they rightly feel is the key to both individual and collective prosperity in the Colonies.

The relation between unemployment in Britain and the degree and extent of discrimination against coloured people has been clearly indicated. Only in an atmosphere in which employers urgently need labour, and workers have no fear of competition, can it be possible to eliminate the effects of colour prejudice and discrimination in industry. The serious difficulties on Merseyside, which has a small degree of unemployment, have been described. It is not difficult to appreciate how much more serious the position would be if there were any return to the situation prevailing in the depression of the 1930's.

The maintenance of full employment, with the exception of the Development Areas, is almost an accomplished fact in Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> It is very far from being achieved in the West Indies. Very much more enterprising development plans than have yet been envisaged will be necessary before every man and woman seeking work in the West Indies can be employed. Yet as Barnes<sup>2</sup> has pointed out the creation of full employment in colonial territories cannot stop at the level at which every person has some kind of work. There must be work offering scope for the highest skill each individual is capable of developing. Such an objective must involve a radical approach to the question of colonial development in which the sums to be invested are measured in the same quantities as the sums now being expended upon rearmament. Nothing less than this can hope to achieve the necessary revolution in production and efficiency which will give Colonial peoples the standard of life which will enable them to play their full part in world affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Written 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Barnes, L., 'The Rights of Dependent Peoples', *Human Rights* (U.N.E.S.C.O.), pp. 244-5 (Wingate, London, 1949).

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It has already been suggested that the spectacular achievement of the Tennessee Valley Authority should be taken as a model for development in the West Indies.<sup>1</sup> Such a project would not only require the investment of large amounts of capital, it would also demand the services of thousands of skilled technicians and engineers, to say nothing of the auxiliary assistance of numerous experts from geologists, botanists and agriculturalists, to architects, planners and social welfare advisers. Such men should clearly be recruited from the Colonies themselves; yet in the initial stages it would not be possible to train the large numbers required on the spot. Well-organised scheme for bringing trainees to England for a period of years to be grounded in all the latest developments of the applied sciences, both physical and social, would be a valuable preliminary to a West Indian T.V.A. scheme. Vision and determination in the application of an ambitious scheme are essential. The somewhat unhappy result of the limited scheme of post-war training and further education, provided for the West Indians at the end of the war, teaches its own lesson. Frustration and disillusionment are the only consequences of organising a training scheme when it is impossible to guarantee employment to the trainees when they have completed their course.

Colonials in Britain are already embittered because extensive schemes for employing European volunteer workers have been organised, although no official consideration appears to have been given to the possibility of a comparable scheme of immigration for Colonials. Many Colonials ask what real meaning the British Commonwealth of Nations has, if Italians and other European workers are given preference over unemployed men in the West Indies, West Africa and elsewhere. This view has been put by at least one distinguished Colonial in a letter to the press<sup>2</sup> and appears to have aroused considerable interest. One employer replied to the effect that he would welcome the opportunity of employing Jamaicans in unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled capacities and suggests that other employers might follow suit. Little appears to have been achieved by this offer. If a scheme of immigration from the West Indies were to be organised it would be essential that the administrations concerned should learn from the experience of the war-time scheme with which this report has been concerned. Above all, a really effective selection procedure would have to be instituted. It has

<sup>1</sup> Simey, T. S., *Welfare and Planning in the West Indies*, p. 252 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1948).

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 27th March 1951.

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been clear from the present investigation that only those men possessing, or capable of acquiring, a high degree of skill, are likely to adjust well. The inefficient selection of men for the war-time scheme (in which a man who had already spent a period in a mental hospital was able to get through) created enormous difficulties; not only did those men who 'got round' the selection procedure become complete misfits, but they also became the maladjusted individuals whose bad behaviour did so much to spoil the good name of the other West Indians. If a policy of assimilation and integration of coloured peoples into the social life of Britain is to be effective, every effort must be made to ensure that the Colonies send here their best men. The present lack of any determined policy results in large numbers of men drifting to Britain, often stowing away to get there, with no plans or prospects when they arrive. In this haphazard way it is not surprising that many of the men who find their way to the United Kingdom are not their own country's best ambassadors.

### 7. LEGAL MEASURES TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION

The facts that have been brought to light in this report show clearly that discrimination does operate against West Indians and other coloured people in Britain, largely in the fields of employment and housing. While it is recognised that prejudice has its roots in personalities, discrimination has been seen to be closely related to economic considerations: hence full employment is the prime requisite for removing discrimination in industry. But the question arises whether certain more positive steps might not be taken to prevent discrimination on the basis of colour. Legal action has definite limits; it is unlikely, in the short run at any rate, that legislation will have very much influence upon basic attitudes of people in Britain. It can, however, go a long way towards preventing prejudicial attitudes from finding their expression in positive acts of discrimination and deprivation, directed towards the coloured person.

The U.N.E.S.C.O. report on Discrimination<sup>1</sup> suggests four ways in which the law may act as a factor preventing discrimination. In the first place the existence of a law on the statute book explicitly outlawing discrimination fosters the conviction that discrimination is wrong by fixing standards which are respected by the great majority of people. Secondly, people who have little respect for the law are nevertheless afraid of the consequences of unlawful conduct; they therefore obey

<sup>1</sup> *Main Types and Causes of Discrimination* (U.N.E.S.C.O., New York, 1949).



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the law in order to avoid its penalties. Thirdly, the resulting daily behaviour, whatever the motive, tends to create social customs which are in harmony with the law. Fourthly, the law can help to repair the harm done by unlawful conduct by providing indemnities and reparation for the person wronged. One of the most frequent complaints made by West Indians, who feel that they have been objects of discrimination, is that they have no means of appeal or redress.

Bettelheim and Janowitz<sup>1</sup> suggest further reasons why legislation against discrimination may prove effective. They point out that prejudiced people are, more often than not, those who rely upon 'external controls'; they have not internalised authority but govern their behaviour very much according to what is acceptable to society at large. It is suggested that, with the waning of the influence of the church and the family as forms of external authority, the law is a powerful force and its institutions stand as basic symbols of external control. As such, the law and the courts provide an immediate focal point for changing basic norms of inter-personal contact outside the primary group. In this way the law can be used to change people's behaviour in relation to other ethnic groups and, ultimately, by changing their behaviour a modifying influence may be brought to bear upon their attitudes.

The evidence in this report certainly suggests that the possession by the Ministry of Labour of the power to require an employer to take certain employees did act as a valuable aid in the placing of the West Indian workers. As soon as the powers of direction of labour were relaxed at the end of the war, much greater difficulty in placing was experienced. It appears that this slight extra power of compulsion is a valuable asset in influencing the behaviour of those employers on the margin who just hesitate whether or not to take coloured workers.

Experience in the United States also bears out the case for legislation against discrimination in employment. The Fair Employment Practices Committee during the war, and the various State Commissions against discrimination which have arisen since the war, have demonstrated that legal measures to prevent discrimination can be effective, and need not, as is sometimes feared, stimulate more bad feeling than existed before. The procedure adopted by the various committees has frequently proved very effective in reaching a settlement and changing the policy of a firm, without the necessity of giving undue publicity to the case. In fact one of the prime reasons for co-operation on the part of firms

<sup>1</sup> Bettelheim and Janowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-7.

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found guilty of discriminatory practices appears to have been the desire to avoid unfavourable publicity.<sup>1</sup>

The experience of the New York State Commission against Discrimination<sup>2</sup> shows that by having a law which does provide for serious penalties, but using at the same time an administrative procedure by which settlements are reached out of court, the best results are achieved. The following is an extract from an editorial in the *New York Herald Tribune*<sup>3</sup> which comments upon the work of the New York State Commissions against Discrimination:

'Legislation against discrimination in employment is practical and successful. This is common knowledge in New York; the evidence is everywhere plain. There were serious doubts when our State Commission against Discrimination began operation in 1945, but the subsequent record is one of expanding progress. The achievements have been many and precise, and the New York system is so well established and recognised that it is now taken as a model in other forward-looking cities and states . . .

'What is our secret of success? First, there is determination firmly and simply expressed in law. Second, the commission gets results by "conference, conciliation and persuasion". Third, our law has teeth. Up to now, the cease-and-desist sanctions of court order have never been sought, which is a tribute to the commission's skilful and fore-handed administration. The necessity for crackdown is avoided by developing a community atmosphere that is progressively favourable. We progress by conscious education; the whole air is co-operation instead of conflict. And this is the triumph of intelligent legislation, the proof that a broad and imperative aim can be harmoniously translated into happy result.'

It is, of course, unwise to argue directly from American experience. The background to racial relations in the two countries is very different. On the other hand, it can be said that F.E.P.C. legislation was successful in America precisely in those areas where the organised public opinion was behind it, and where it was directed against the recalcitrant minority. Such legislation could not hope to succeed in an atmosphere of very severe prejudice against the Negro. In England the situation is comparable with that in the northern states of the U.S., in so far as public opinion in general would not, knowingly, condone discrimination if attention was drawn to its existence. So long as full employment was ensured the co-operation of the trade unions could, in most cases, be relied upon, as was shown by their firm policy during the war. On the other hand, it would be wrong to suggest that legislation against

<sup>1</sup> Final Report of the F.E.P.C., 28th June 1946 (Washington, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> Report of Progress, 1948 (New York, 1949).

<sup>3</sup> 28th March 1949.



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discrimination should not be proposed without the backing of all the trade unions, because in certain instances it might be necessary to contemplate action against the union as much as against the employer.

Legislation against discrimination may also be necessary in other fields as well as that of employment. At the present time the entrance of coloured people into hotels and similar places is governed by common law. Although a High Court case<sup>1</sup> has established the precedent that such places cannot operate a colour bar, the law in this connection is vague and difficult to interpret. In any case there are few coloured people who can afford to take a costly case to the High Court. Some simpler procedure is desirable, which could be made possible by the introduction of a definite statutory law against colour discrimination in hotels, restaurants, dance halls and the like. There is the further question of restrictive clauses in leases for household property. This is not a problem which seriously affects the average coloured person who is not interested in leasehold property. There are, nevertheless, some coloured professional people who are affected. The subtler forms of discrimination in the letting of rooms might also be made illegal. The obnoxious practice of charging higher rents to coloured people can, in most cases, be dealt with under the existing law through the Rent Restrictions Acts, and the Rent Tribunals which have been set up for furnished property.

The possibility of legislation against discrimination in housing and in public places such as restaurants and hotels has already been seriously considered and a private member's Bill has been introduced into the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup> No attempt was made in this Bill to deal with discrimination in employment. In some respects it is a pity that special tribunals could not be set up, as in the United States in connection with F.E.P.C.; the penalties proposed in the Bill were somewhat small, and are unlikely to deter a hotel proprietor or property owner who is determined not to accept coloured people. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that any special tribunals could be set up in view of the fact that the problem is not on a sufficiently large scale to keep its members occupied. If, however, the coloured population of Britain were to grow, some other procedure than an application through the courts of summary jurisdiction might become practicable.

<sup>1</sup> *Constantine v. Imperial Hotels Ltd.*, K.B. Div., 28th June 1944 (*Times Law Reports*, 4th August 1944).

<sup>2</sup> Colour Bar Bill, 14 & 15 Geo. 6, *Bill 33*. A debate in the House of Commons in May 1953 also rejected the idea of legislating against racial discrimination in Britain or the Colonies. *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)* Vol. 514, No. 100.



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### 8. EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER MEASURES TO COMBAT COLOUR PREJUDICE

Probably one of the most valuable results of legislation against discrimination would be an increase in the morale of coloured people, who would feel that such an act on the statute book was their charter. It might help to convince the Negro population of the country that the Government really is concerned for their welfare. Yet legislative action will be abortive unless at the same time every effort is made to tackle the problem of prejudice, as well as that of overt discrimination. For this purpose a number of other lines of action are required to support and supplement the legal.

The importance of media of mass communication—the press, radio, television, books, films, etc.—for influencing public opinion cannot be over-emphasised. All these instruments must be brought into service if the attitudes of white people towards coloured are to be modified. The object of such propaganda must be to present the facts about different races and nationalities in a constructive way, so that commonly held stereotypes may be gradually removed. The biological and social aspects of race differences must be made clear, and false ideas regarding the inferiority of some peoples compared with others, or of the offspring of mixed marriages, must be corrected. In addition to the provision of correct information, attempts must be made to influence the emotional aspects of people's attitudes and enlist their sympathetic feelings towards others. By this is not meant the creation of sentimental or condescending attitudes, but the enlisting of human emotions in such a way that people will be led to identify with others and to understand the members of minority groups as ordinary human beings like themselves.

There have been recent signs that in Britain efforts are being made in a number of quarters to deal with the colour question in a frank and realistic way; there is reason to believe that these efforts may already be influencing public opinion in a small way. There have been a number of talks on the radio in which coloured and Colonial people have been able to present their problems and their point of view. Television has also made the bold experiment of presenting a programme devoted to Cardiff's 'Bute Town'; the life of the coloured population of that city was sympathetically presented, and an opportunity provided for coloured people to express their views and feelings. During the past year a number of films have introduced the theme of coloured/white conflict and dealt with it openly and with a singular absence of bias in

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favour of the white. Most of these films have been American, but one English film<sup>1</sup> at least has also introduced the previously tabooed issue of a Negro and his friendship with a white girl. The film does not pretend to provide any answer to this dilemma, but it presents the issue in a pertinent and sympathetic way. The press, too, in some cases, has recently shown more restraint in its presentation of sensational news in which coloured people are portrayed unfavourably—although much more could be done to tone down some reporting, without in any way avoiding the truth. Some papers have gone further and presented leading articles which have dealt constructively with the position of Colonials in this country, and with the problems of the Colonies themselves.<sup>2</sup> Such a treatment of the problem, it is believed, would do much to break down false stereotypes, especially those which are largely the product of ignorance rather than of malice. There is reason to believe that the majority of prejudiced people would fall into this category and would be considerably influenced in their attitude, if such an educative programme could be maintained.

Schools, naturally, have an important part to play. Care must be taken to see that school text-books are up to date and present a fair and sympathetic picture of Colonial peoples and their way of life. Reference to their backwardness must be accompanied by emphasis upon the progress that is being made and the part that the African and other Colonial peoples are themselves playing in the development of their countries. Here again visual aids, such as the film, can be of use. It is important also that the right attitudes are adopted by teachers themselves, and coloured children in the class must not be treated as in any way different from their fellows or used as illustrations in geography lessons. H. E. O. James and C. Tenen in their book, *The Teacher Was Black*, show the value of exchange visits with Colonial teachers.

All the good work that may be done in schools can be undone, if the attitudes of parents are not helpful. Education is as much carried on in the home as in the school, if only by reason of imitation and adoption of parental habits and attitudes. Parents who are unduly concerned with social status and forbid their children to play with the coloured

<sup>1</sup> 'Port of London', Ealing Studios, released 1951.

<sup>2</sup> One West Indian reported that, following an article by Arthur Helliwell in *The People* in which he discussed the unemployment and other problems in Jamaica, several people in the factory, who had hitherto been somewhat cold and vaguely hostile, came up to him and said, 'Just been reading about your home in the paper. Didn't know it was as bad as that. Don't blame you boys wanting to stay here. How's your family fixed? Are they alright?'



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children down the street may be having a serious effect upon their children's behaviour in later life. Furthermore, as Bettelheim and Janowitz<sup>1</sup> have pointed out, education for better ethnic relations must reach a deeper level than that touched by factual information and conscious attitudes. Severe prejudice is a product of basic personality traits. One of the most important functions of the home is to provide an atmosphere of love and security, in which the child can grow to view life experiences as rewarding rather than deprivational. The building up of such personalities begins at birth and continues throughout life. Radical changes may be necessary in traditional parent/child relationships if adults with balanced integrated personalities are to be created who can face difficulties without undue anxiety, and who do not need to resort to violent prejudices to maintain their own self-esteem.<sup>2</sup> Clearly the development of a secure home background must be accompanied by a social system in which there is a minimum of avoidable occasions for fear: unemployment, war and all the other causes of fear in social life must be removed if a society free of prejudice is to be created.

The Churches have an important part to play in the future in the breaking down of prejudices and the removal of discriminatory practices. The Churches have not been conspicuous in the past for their lack of prejudice. On the contrary, they may be said to have thrived on prejudice throughout the ages—prejudice against the infidel and the heathen and, in more recent years, prejudice between the denominations. Yet there are signs today of reawakening to the Gospel message of the unity of mankind, and the all-important influence of love in human relationships. In many spheres the influence of the Churches is weakening—not least among enlightened Colonial peoples. Now is the time to come down on the side of the oppressed and champion their cause with all the weapons in their power—both spiritual and secular. A small sign of the Churches' awakening interest in the problems of coloured peoples was the conference held in Liverpool in 1951. This was organised by the British Council of Churches and there were present a number of clergy from cities which now have a sizeable coloured population, together with a number of officials from government departments and elsewhere. The conference passed several resolutions in which it condemned discriminatory practices and unanimously endorsed a policy of assimilation for Colonial peoples in Britain.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 178 and 184.

<sup>2</sup> Bowloy, J., *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (W.H.O., Geneva, 1951).



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There is the serious danger that the whole question may remain at the level of pious resolutions. The author has been called upon many times to address public meetings, often organised by Churches, in which he has talked about the colour question. He has been given a sympathetic hearing and platitudes were freely expressed but he has real doubts as to whether it was worth while. As Lewin has put it:

'When the inter-group worker, coming home from a good-will meeting which he helped to instigate, thinks of the dignitaries he was able to line up, the stirring appeals he heard, the impressive setting of the stage, and the good quality of the food, he cannot help feeling elated by the general atmosphere and the words of praise from his friends all round. Still, a few days later, when the next case of discrimination becomes known, he often wonders whether all this was more than whitewash and whether he is right in accepting the acknowledgment of his friends as a measuring stick for the progress of his work.'<sup>1</sup>

Experience has shown that the most effective way of changing attitudes and behaviour is not exhortation from a platform. Worse still is a condemning attitude which creates an undue feeling of guilt in the prejudiced person. This will tend, as likely as not, to intensify his dislike of the person or group in question. Rather, it is necessary to involve the individual in some active process in which his emotive as well as his cognitive faculties are enlisted. Attitudes are most easily changed when a group of people who are fairly closely identified with each other are influenced together. Each individual supports and reinforces the other. If long-held prejudices are to be altered, this will only occur when the pressure of primary group and public opinion is in favour of the change. Experiment has shown that the exposure of a group of students to a series of visits to the Negro part of a town, and to lectures, tea meetings and informal contact with coloured people, over a period of two or three days in all, can have a considerable modifying effect on hostile attitudes which appears to be lasting.<sup>2</sup> Much more needs to be done.

One of the most important aspects of any attempt to improve racial relations in Liverpool must be the breaking down of the present barriers to communication between the coloured and white populations. Only in this way will unfavourable stereotypes be eliminated, and personal contacts established, upon which more constructive relationships can be built. As long as the coloured population does not move out of the south end, either to live or for its recreation, and as long as white people

<sup>1</sup> Lewin, K., *Resolving Social Conflicts*, p. 202 (Harper, New York, 1948).

<sup>2</sup> Smith, F. T., *An Experiment in Modifying Attitudes towards the Negro* (Columbia, New York, 1943).

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do not mix with coloured even when they live near each other, so long will hostile attitudes on both sides persist. In this connection the community centre has an important part to play. The centre must no longer accept the rôle which it has fulfilled in the past, of providing for coloured people recreational opportunities that they lacked elsewhere. This is a passive resignation to the pattern of accommodation which has singularly failed to bring harmony between the coloured and white people in the neighbourhood. Instead the centre should become the spearhead of an active movement for the assimilation of the coloured population. It must become an active agent for the breaking down of barriers, rather than passively accept their existence as hitherto. To this end it must first of all disassociate itself from the bad reputation that the centre gained in the past. It must then open its doors wide to all people resident in the neighbourhood irrespective of colour, class or creed. That is to say, white people must be made to feel as much at home as coloured. Activities and facilities provided must be such as to attract people in the neighbourhood: a good restaurant service, especially if the premises were licensed, would be profitable and would attract many visitors. A suggestion of this kind may read, to those who are familiar with the problems of the centre, as a counsel of perfection. It will not be possible to break down the prejudice and hostilities of years, without much patience and tolerance. A policy such as that described may at first even increase the amount of tension arising. The change from a pattern of accommodation to a more active process of assimilation is bound at first to increase the amount of conflict between the two groups. Yet it is the only policy which will ultimately bring about a state of harmony between coloured and white peoples.<sup>1</sup>

No one policy alone is going to have the desired effect. All the goodwill in the world and all the attempts to bring about assimilation by breaking down barriers and removing prejudice will be to no avail if, for example, tensions at the international level continue to be a source of anxiety to people. It is true that a state of war may temporarily bring about a greater sense of unity among the constituent national, racial and class groups on either side. Yet, in the long run, such a situation can only be productive of greater tension and frustration; once the war is over this will vent itself once more in conflicts between groups within the nations.

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written a new policy has been endorsed by the council of the centre which incorporates many of the above principles. A substantial grant of money was received in 1952 with which to implement the new plans.



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### 9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is important that any programme of action for the improvement of racial relations should be based upon the best possible understanding of the factors involved. There is a great need for much more intensive and extensive research into various aspects of racial relations in England. The suggestions made here are only a few of the possible fields which might be explored, but these proposals arise more or less directly out of the present research.<sup>1</sup>

It would be very valuable indeed if comparative studies could be made of the assimilation and adjustment of other immigrant groups within the population, and of their descendants. Studies of Africans in England would provide a useful comparison with the present study which has been limited entirely to West Indians. An interesting study, which might also act as a control group for a study of Colonials, would be an investigation of the assimilation and adjustment of a group of European volunteer workers. In this way it would be possible to discover the extent to which the position of immigrant Colonials in Britain is merely that which is inherent in the circumstances of any immigrant group, or whether there have been added difficulties which can be directly attributed to the factor of race and colour.

A study of the English-born coloured community would be very valuable. A study of the health and welfare of coloured children in comparison with a control group of white children has already been given serious consideration. A study of the adult community would help to show the extent to which second and third generations of coloured families still suffer handicaps as a result of prejudice and discrimination; it would be interesting also to discover the extent to which consciousness of colour leaves a mark upon the personalities of English-born coloured people. A sociological and psychological study might be made of a group of coloured delinquent youths with a matched group of white delinquents.

A good deal more work needs to be done in the field of personality studies, to investigate in more detail the kind of hypotheses regarding West Indian Negro personality that Simey and Hadley have put forward, and which have also been tentatively suggested in this study. The use of test material and detailed life histories may be desirable in this connection. Comparative studies might be made with other

<sup>1</sup> Further research on racial relations is at present being undertaken by the Universities of Liverpool and Edinburgh, and by other bodies.



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Colonials and with white people. A more detailed study might be made of the response of the Negro personality to the experience of prejudice and discrimination, with particular reference to the tendency which has been observed in this research, viz. that of responding with an equally biased and prejudiced attitude towards white people. Negro stereotypes of white people might prove illuminating.

Studies of the genesis of prejudice in the personality have already gone a long way in America, and Robb's study of anti-semitism in London has provided useful confirmation in an English cultural background. Particularly valuable would be an investigation into the part played by sexual repression in prejudice against the Negro. The Bettelheim and Janowitz hypothesis that such attitudes are found in colour prejudice and not in anti-semitism warrants further investigation.

We have learned enough about the origins of prejudice in the personality to know that one of its prime sources lies in anxiety, particularly in early life experience. Further studies of parent/child relationships and of patterns of child-rearing would be of great value in pointing the way to the development of healthier integrated personalities, in which love rather than hate is the dominating motive governing behaviour.

Finally, there will be need to provide follow-up investigations into the effectiveness of various types of educational programme. Means of testing attitudes before and after exposure to films or other means of influencing opinion must be devised and applied. A body of knowledge must be accumulated which will indicate the effective means of influencing attitudes and suggest the most profitable lines of action that might be taken to combat prejudice. In this connection the concept of action research, which provides for the combination of research with a programme of therapy, is important. Experiments, particularly those with which the names of Dr. Kurt Lewin and Dr. Ronald Lippitt have been associated in the United States, have shown the value of this approach. In this country there is at present a singular lack of the resources, both in finance and in trained personnel, to carry out such programmes as effectively as could be wished. This is, however, a field which warrants serious consideration for the future.

### 10. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

This research endeavoured to trace the relationships between a group of West Indian Negro workers and the other people with whom they came into contact in this country over a period of ten years. The methods used have involved the collection of evidence from documentary sources

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and from field interviews. The data obtained in this way were interpreted in the light of the concepts of assimilation, accommodation and conflict and the concept of individual adjustment. A number of hypotheses, which have already been shown to have a high degree of probability in social psychology, were applied to the data and proved valuable aids in analysis.

The study of the relationships between the two groups has led to the following general conclusions. The attitudes of white people towards the West Indian Negroes, which were already conditioned by the stereotypes existing about Negroes in the city, can be understood in terms of the strong in-group feelings of the white population. The Negroes tended to be regarded as an out-group threatening the security and status of the in-group. This led to feelings of resentment and hostility which found their expression in various forms of prejudice and discrimination. The out-group, in its turn, endeavoured to gain acceptance and admission into the in-group and to break down the resistance felt towards it. The West Indian Negroes attempted to establish a position of some status and recognition within the in-group. The fact of resistance had the effect of creating anxiety and insecurity among the Negro group which in turn led to aggressive attitudes and behaviour towards the white.

The relation of the two groups to each other ultimately expressed itself in a compromise. The Negro out-group was tolerated as long as it did not trespass too far into the lives of the white in-group. The members of the out-group in their turn sought compensatory outlets for their status drives within the Negro community itself. The Negroes themselves began to develop strong in-group feelings in relation to the rest of society. The Negro community increasingly sought their recreation among themselves and this tendency was encouraged by the creation of a community centre for coloured people, and the setting up of a number of clubs and cafés which catered especially for Colonials. This compromise pattern of relationships, which has been called accommodation, aggravated the existing barriers to communication between the two groups. False frames of reference were created or perpetuated and, consequently, overt or underlying hostility between the Negro and white communities has continued.

The adjustment of the individual West Indian in these circumstances depended, more than anything else, upon the extent to which he succeeded in establishing satisfactory personal relationships with other coloured or white people of an affective (friendly) kind. Maladjustment

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appears to have been a product of anxiety and insecurity, often a result of a severe colour consciousness aggravated by a sense of deprivation and isolation, which may or may not have been grounded in actual experiences of prejudice and discrimination.

The study concluded with a number of practical proposals for the diminution of prejudice and discrimination, in which the importance of maintaining full employment and of eliminating other anxiety-creating situations in social life, from early years in the family onwards, were emphasised.

It remains for further research to be done on other coloured and white immigrant groups in Britain to decide the extent to which the experience of the West Indians was mainly a product of their minority and immigrant position or the extent to which it was primarily a consequence of colour. Whatever the results of further research may be, the present study conclusively demonstrates that there is widespread colour prejudice in Britain.



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### EVALUATION OF DATA AND METHODS

THE principal methods employed in this research were described in Chapter I. It remains to consider the extent to which the data collected and the conclusions reached are justified in the light of the canons of scientific method.

Any piece of sociological research should be subjected to a critical analysis in order to ensure that unjustifiable claims are not being made for the results of the investigation. As H. Blumer has pointed out, this assessment may be made under four headings, (a) the representativeness of the data, (b) the adequacy of the data, (c) the reliability of the data, (d) the validity of the interpretations.<sup>1</sup>

(a) *Representativeness of the data.* In the statistical analysis of the data, obtained from the individual case files, the author had the advantage of dealing with all the cases, rather than with a sample. Problems of sampling error, and similar questions, which arise in dealing with the representativeness of a sample did not, therefore, occur in this case. The only qualification to this claim is that owing to uncontrollable circumstances, arising administratively in the Ministry of Labour, eight files relating to technicians and twenty-eight to trainees were missing, or did not provide sufficient information to be included in the statistical analysis. Careful account has been taken of this fact and there is no reason to believe that this has in any way affected the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data.

With regard to the interviews, it did not prove possible to interview every man still in Britain, but every endeavour was made to ensure that the men interviewed formed a cross-section of those still resident in Liverpool. In any case, no statistical conclusions have been drawn from interview data. Unless otherwise stated, the illustrative cases used in the text to demonstrate particular points have been chosen because

<sup>1</sup> Blumer, H., *An Appraisal of 'The Polish Peasant'* (Social Science Research Council, New York, 1939).

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of their typicality. It is specifically noted if the case appears to be unique or unusual in some way.

### ANALYSIS OF CASES STUDIED

Number of men in Scheme. . . . .	345
Number eliminated through insufficient data (see footnote, page 26) . . . . .	36
	<hr/>
<i>Statistical Data relate to</i> . . . . .	309
	<hr/>
Repatriated, deceased or otherwise removed before 1946	190
Left U.K. or joined H.M. Forces since 1946. . . . .	25
	<hr/>
	215
	<hr/>
Presumed to have remained in U.K. . . . .	94
Returned to U.K. since 1946 . . . . .	30
	<hr/>
	124
	<hr/>
Distribution in U.K. (approximate at December 1950)	
Merseyside . . . . .	80
Manchester . . . . .	15
Bolton . . . . .	6
Midlands . . . . .	11
London . . . . .	6
Other . . . . .	6
	<hr/>
	124
	<hr/>
<i>Cases in Merseyside:</i>	
No information. . . . .	4
Followed up . . . . .	76
	<hr/>
	80
	<hr/>
<i>Cases Followed Up:</i>	
<i>Investigated</i> (i.e. enquiries, contacts and short interviews to establish where living, whether employed, marital status, Colonial Office record, etc.) . . . . .	66
<i>Intensive Case Studies</i> . . . . .	10
	<hr/>
	76
	<hr/>

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(b) *Adequacy of the data.* The data upon which this study has been based are extensive and the fact that documentary data have been checked wherever possible with the evidence from interviews and vice versa has proved a useful methodological procedure. The opportunity to examine and make abstracts from the extensive Ministry of Labour reports upon the West Indians over a period of five years, and to compare this information with the independent views of personnel officers and welfare workers, etc., was very valuable. Unfortunately, it was not possible to publish the intensive case studies which provided many useful insights. The data available, it is felt, were adequate for the kind of conclusion that has been drawn. This is a question which in the last resort the critical reader must judge for himself.

(c) *Reliability of the data.* The problem of the reliability of sociological data is perhaps one of the most difficult ones facing the social scientist. The element of subjective bias which may enter into the assessments, especially of such questions as skill and adjustment, is undoubtedly great and every precaution has been taken to overcome this. Similarly, the question arises as to the accuracy with which factual data has been recorded on the individual case files, and the extent to which information conveyed in the interview situation has been properly recorded. Furthermore, information may be taken at its face value, or it may be recognised to contain elements that are influenced by the interviewed person's desire to create a certain impression.

These problems have been very fully dealt with by Dollard,<sup>1</sup> and the present writer can only repeat the points made by him. With experience it is possible to attain a considerable skill in reporting the content of an interview, even though it may not have been possible to take notes at the time, so long as the interview was written up either fully or in note form within an hour or two of its taking place. The result is not perfect, but it is usually of more value than an interview in which the respondent is inhibited by the interviewer making detailed notes. The question of rapport and confidence between a coloured and a white person is more difficult. Negroes themselves are apt to claim that 'no white man can ever properly understand a Negro's feelings'. There is, furthermore, a tendency for the Negro to present an attitude to the white person which is governed by what he feels he ought to say to the white man. With some experience it is not difficult to tell when the respondent is consciously, or unconsciously, exaggerating or posing. It was often found

<sup>1</sup> Dollard, J., *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, Chapters 2 and 3 (Yale University Press, 1937).



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that the first half-hour of an interview would be full of stereotypes and clichés, but with growing confidence and frankness the interviewed person's real feelings would appear later.

The largest doubt may arise in the mind of the critical reader with regard to the assessments of skill and adjustment, which have been reduced for the purpose of this study to a five-point scale. However, a number of tests have been applied to the data which suggest that it is in fact highly reliable. In the case of the comparisons between skill and adjustment made in the report two independent measures of skill have been used. First, there is occupational classification, and second, the Ministry of Labour assessment; and both these show substantially the same results. The assessments of adjustment to working conditions were made by the Welfare Officer in charge of the West Indians as a result of a considerable personal knowledge of the man, and after consultation with the personnel department of the firms concerned, and with the man's own foreman and workmates. The results of this assessment accord closely with more recent information obtained by the writer in the course of his interviews with the men and with officials and others knowing them.

(d) *Validity of the interpretations.* The question of validity as applied to the interpretation of the results of social research is an extremely difficult one, involving not only the obvious factors of logical deduction and induction from the data, but also questions regarding the pre-suppositions adopted by the social scientist in the course of his interpretations. These have been mentioned in the first chapter.

Where a number of different variables enter into a relationship, and it has not been possible adequately to control all but the one under consideration, the validity of any relationship postulated must be regarded as doubtful, unless there is supporting evidence to suggest that the uncontrolled variables are not in fact in any way casually related to the ones studied. Wherever possible in social science this problem is overcome by the use of control groups, or by a process of matching between the groups compared. In the present study this has not been possible. The case-study approach used here does not enable hypotheses to be tested under controlled conditions. Certain statistical relationships found in the present study must, therefore, be treated with caution. In all cases where results have been presented in statistical form chi-square, or other tests of significance, have been applied, the results are stated in terms of the probability that the result could have come about by chance. In most cases the probability is less than one in a hundred.

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Even though they do throw light on certain problems, the interpretation of the statistics must remain hypothetical. Nevertheless, the fact that the hypotheses, set out in Chapter I, have been tested previously in other researches suggests that their usefulness in interpreting the data in the present study is not merely coincidental. There is good reason to believe, therefore, that the theory of inter-group relations set out in this book, has a universal validity.





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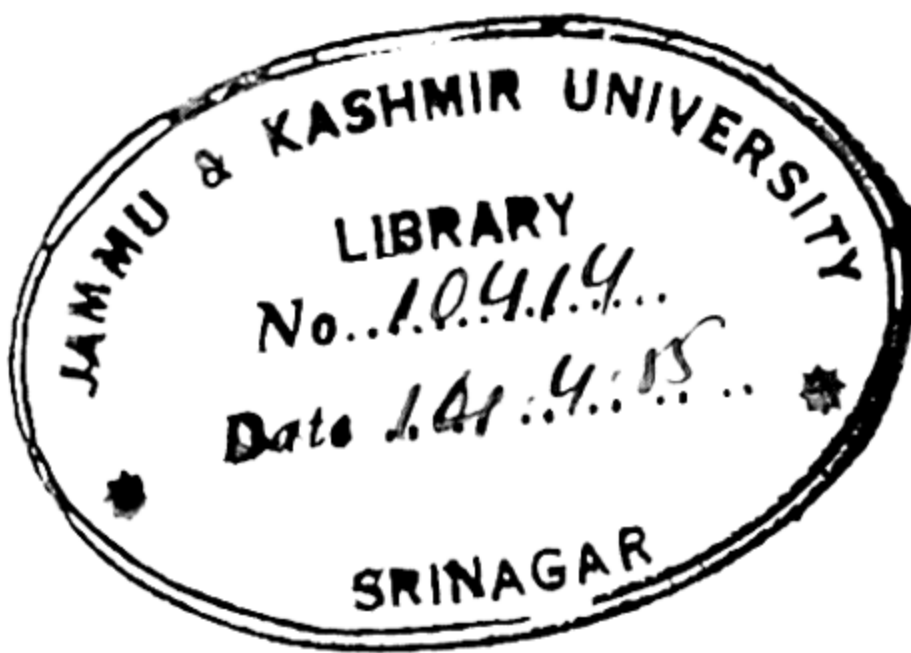


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